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THE
PLAYS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.
IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

THE
PLAYS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,
ACCURATELY PRINTED FROM
THE TEXT OF MR. STEEVENS'S LAST EDITION,
WITH
A SELECTION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT NOTES,
IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

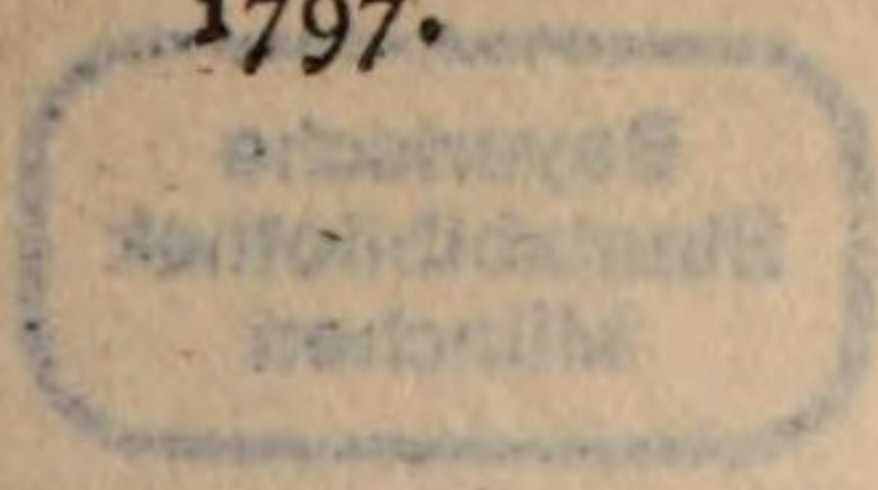
VOLUME VIII.

CONTAINING
KING LEAR;
ROMEO AND JULIET;
HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK
OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. LONGMAN, B. LAW, C. DILLY, J. JOHNSON,
G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, R. BALDWIN, H. L. GARDNER,
J. SEWELL, W. RICHARDSON, J. NICHOLS, F. AND C. RIVINGTON,
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1797.



**Bayerische
Staatsbibliothek
München**

KING LEAR.

* * The story of this tragedy had found its way into many ballads and other metrical pieces; yet Shakspeare seems to have been more indebted to *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella*, 1605, (which I have already published at the end of a collection of the quarto copies) than to all the other performances together. It appears from the books at Stationers' Hall, that some play on this subject was entered by Edward White, May 14, 1594. "A booke entituled, *The mosse famous Chronicle Hystorie of Leire King of England, and his three Daughters*." A piece with the same title is entered again, May 8, 1605; and again Nov. 26, 1607. See the extracts from these Entries at the end of the Prefaces, &c. Vol. I. From *The Mirror of Magistrates*, 1587, Shakspeare has, however, taken the hint for the behaviour of the Steward, and the reply of Cordelia to her father concerning her future marriage. The episode of Gloster and his sons must have been borrowed from Sidney's *Arcadia*, as I have not found the least trace of it in any other work. I have referred to these pieces, wherever our author seems more immediately to have followed them, in the course of my notes on the play. For the first *King Lear*, see likewise *Six old Plays on which Shakspeare founded*, &c. published for S. Leacroft, Charing-Cross.

The reader will also find the story of *K. Lear*, in the second book and 10th canto of Spenser's *Faery Queen*, and in the 15th chapter of the third book of Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602.

The whole of this play, however, could not have been written till after 1603. Harfnet's pamphlet to which it contains so many references, (as will appear in the notes) was not published till that year. STEEVENS.

Camden, in his *Remains*, (p. 306. ed. 1674,) tells a familiar story to this of *Leir* or *Lear*, of Ina king of the West Saxons; which, if the thing ever happened, probably was the real origin of the fable. See under the head of *Wise Speeches*. PERCY.

The story told by Camden in his *Remaines*, 4to. 1605, is this:—Ina, king of West Saxons, had three daughters, of whom upon a time he demanded whether they did love him, and so would do during their lives, above all others: the two elder sware deeply they would; the youngest, but the wisest, told her father flatly, without flattery, that albeit she did love, honour, and reverence him, and so would whilst she lived, as much as nature and daughterly dutie at the uttermost could expect, yet she did think that one day it would come to passe that she should affect another more fervently, meaning her husband, when she were married; who being made one flesh with her, as God by commandment had told, and nature had taught her, she was to cleave fast to, forsaking father and mother, kisse and kinne. [Anonymous.] One referreth this to the daughters of king Leir."

It is, I think, more probable that Shakspeare had this passage in his thoughts, when he wrote Cordelia's reply concerning her future marriage, than *The Mirror for Magistrates*, as Camden's book was published recently before he appears to have composed this play, and that portion of it which is entitled *Wise Speeches*, where the foregoing passage is found, furnished him with a hint in *Coriolanus*.

The

The story of King Leir and his three daughters was originally told by Geoffrey of Monmouth, from whom Holinshed transcribed it; and in his Chronicle Shakspeare had certainly read it, as it occurs not far from that of *Cymbeline*; though the old play on the same subject probably first suggested to him the idea of making it the ground-work of a tragedy.

Geoffrey of Monmouth says, that Leir, who was the eldest son of Bladud, "nobly governed his country for sixty years." According to that historian, he died about 800 years before the birth of Christ.

The name of Leir's youngest daughter, which in Geoffrey's history, in Holinshed, *The Mirrour for Magistrates*, and the old anonymous play, is *Cordeilla*, *Cordila*, or *Cordella*, Shakspeare found softened into *Cordelia* by Spenser in his Second Book, Canto X. The names of Edgar and Edmund were probably suggested by Holinshed. See his *Chronicle*, Vol. I. p. 122: "Edgar, the son of Edmund, brother of Athelstane," &c.

This tragedy, I believe, was written in 1605. See *An Attempt to ascertain the order of Shakspeare's plays*.

As the episode of Gloucester and his sons is undoubtedly formed on the story of the blind king of Paphlagonia in Sidney's *Arcadia*, I shall subjoin it, at the end of the play. MALONE.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Lear, King of Britain.
King of France.
Duke of Burgundy.
Duke of Cornwall.
Duke of Albany.
Earl of Kent.
Earl of Gloster.
Edgar, Son to Gloster.
Edmund, Bastard Son to Gloster.
Curan, a Courtier.
Old Man, Tenant to Gloster.
Physician.
Fool.
Oswald, Steward to Goneril.
An Officer, employed by Edmund.
Gentleman, attendant on Cordelia.
A Herald.
Servants to Cornwall.

Goneril,
Regan, } *Daughters to Lear.*
Cordelia,

Knights attending on the King, Officers, Messengers, Soldiers,
and Attendants.

SCENE, Britain.

K I N G L E A R.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Room of state in King Lear's Palace.

Enter KENT, GLOSTER, and EDMUND.

Kent. I thought, the king had more affected the duke of Albany, than Cornwall.

Glo. It did always seem so to us : but now, in the division of the kingdom,² it appears not which of the dukes he values most ; for equalities are so weigh'd, that curiosity³ in neither can make choice of either's moiety.⁴

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord ?

Glo. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge : I have so often blush'd to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it.

Kent. I cannot conceive you.

Glo. Sir, this young fellow's mother could : whereupon she grew round-wombed ; and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle, ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault ?

Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.⁵

Glo.

² There is something of obscurity or inaccuracy in this preparatory scene. The king has already divided his kingdom, and yet when he enters he examines his daughters, to discover in what proportions he should divide it. Perhaps Kent and Gloster only were privy to his design, which he still kept in his own hands, to be changed or performed as subsequent reasons should determine him. JOHNSON.

³ *Curiosity*, for exactest scrutiny. The sense of the whole sentence is, The qualities and properties of the several divisions are so weighed and balanced against one another, that the exactest scrutiny could not determine in preferring one share to the other. WARBURTON.

Curiosity is scrupulousness, or captiousness. STEEVENS.

⁴ The strict sense of the word *moiety* is *half*, one of two equal parts ; but Shakspeare commonly uses it for *any part* or *division*. STEEVENS.

Heywood likewise uses the word *moiety* as synonymous to *any part* or *portion*. MALONE.

⁵ i. e. handsome. MALONE.

Glo. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this,⁶ who yet is no dearer in my account: though this knave came somewhat faucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged.—Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edm. No, my lord.

Glo. My lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

Edm. My services to your lordship.

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving.

Glo. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again:—The king is coming. [*Trumpets sound within.*]

Enter LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants.

Lear. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloster.

Glo. I shall, my liege.

[*Exeunt* GLOSTER and EDMUND.]

Lear. Mean-time we shall express our darker purpose.⁷ Give me the map there.—Know, that we have divided, In three, our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent To shake all cares and business from our age; Conferring them on younger strengths, while we Unburden'd crawl toward death.—Our son of Cornwall, And you, our no less loving son of Albany, We have this hour a constant will⁸ to publish Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy, Great

⁶ *Some year*, is an expression used when we speak indefinitely.

STEEVENS.

⁷ *Darker*, for more secret; not for indirect, oblique. WARBURTON.

This word may admit a further explication. *We shall express our darker purpose*: that is, we have already made known in some measure our desire of parting the kingdom; we will now discover what has not been told before, the reasons by which we shall regulate the partition. This interpretation will justify or palliate the exordial dialogue. JOHNSON.

⁸ Seems a confirmation of *fast* intent. JOHNSON.

Constant is *firm*, *determined*. *Const. ut vult* is the *certa voluntas* of Virgil.

STEEVENS.

Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
 Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
 And here are to be answer'd.—Tell me, my daughters,
 (Since now we will devest us, both of rule,
 Interest of territory, cares of state,)
 Which of you, shall we say, doth love us most?
 That we our largest bounty may extend
 Where merit doth most challenge it.—Goneril,
 Our eldest-born, speak first.

Gon.

Sir, I

Do love you more than words can wield the matter,
 Dearer than eye-sight, space and liberty;
 Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
 No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour:
 As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found.
 A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
 Beyond all manner of so much⁸ I love you.

Cor. What shall Cordelia do? Love and be silent. [*Afide.*]

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
 With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,⁹
 With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
 We make thee lady: To thine and Albany's issue
 Be this perpetual.—What says our second daughter,
 Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

Reg. I am made of that self metal as my sister,
 And prize me² at her worth. In my true heart

I find,

⁸ Beyond all assignable quantity. I love you beyond limits, and cannot say it is *so much*, for how much soever I should name, it would be yet more. JOHNSON.

⁹ *Rich'd* is used for *enriched*, as *'tice* for *entice*, *'bate* for *abate*, *strain* for *constrain*, &c. M. MASON.

² I believe this passage should rather be pointed thus:

And prize me at her worth, in my true heart

I find, she names, &c.

That is, *And so may you, prize me at her worth, as in my true heart I find, that she names, &c.* TYRWHITT.

I believe we should read:

“And prize *you* at her worth;”

That is, set the same high value upon you that she does. M. MASON.

Prize me at her worth, perhaps means, *I think myself as worthy of your favour as she is.* HENLEY.

I find, she names my very deed of love ;
 Only she comes too short,—that I profess³
 Myself an enemy to all other joys,
 Which the most precious square⁴ of sense possesses;
 And find, I am alone felicitate
 In your dear highness' love.

Cor. Then poor Cordelia ! [*Aside.*

And yet not so ; since, I am sure, my love's
 More richer than my tongue.⁵

Lear. To thee, and thine, hereditary ever,
 Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom ;
 No less in space, validity,⁶ and pleasure,
 Than that confirm'd on Goneril.—Now, our joy,
 Although the last, not least ; to whose young love
 The vines of France, and milk of Burgundy,
 Strive to be interests'd ; what can you say, to draw
 A third more opulent than your sisters ? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing ?

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing can come of nothing : speak again.

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
 My heart into my mouth : I love your majesty
 According to my bond ; nor more, nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia ? mend your speech a little,
 Lest it may mar your fortunes.

Cor.

Good my lord,

You

³ *That* seems to stand without relation, but is referred to *find*, the first conjunction being inaccurately suppressed. I find *that* she names my deed, I *find* that I profess, &c. JOHNSON.

The true meaning is this:—"My sister has equally expressed my sentiments, only she comes short of me in this, that I profess myself an enemy to all joys but you."—*That I profess*, means, *in that I profess*.

M. MASON.

Perhaps *square* means only *compass*, *comprehension*. JOHNSON.

I believe that Shakspeare uses *square* for the full complement of all the senses. EDWARDS.

⁵ We should read—*their tongue*, meaning her sisters. WARBURTON.

I think the present reading right. JOHNSON.

⁶ *Validity*, for worth, value ; not for integrity, or good title.

WARBURTON.

You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me : I
 Return those duties back as are right fit,
 Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
 Why have my sisters husbands, if they say,
 They love you, all ? Haply, when I shall wed,
 That lord, whose hand must take my plight, shall carry
 Half my love with him, half my care, and duty :
 Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
 To love my father all.

Lear. But goes this with thy heart ?

Cor. Ay, good my lord :

Lear. So young, and so untender ?

Cor. So young, my lord, and true.

Lear. Let it be so,—Thy truth then be thy dower :
 For, by the sacred radiance of the sun ;
 The mysteries of Hecate, and the night ;
 By all the operations of the orbs,
 From whom we do exist, and cease to be ;
 Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
 Propinquity and property of blood,
 And as a stranger to my heart and me—
 Hold thee, from this,⁷ for ever. The barbarous Scythian,
 Or he that makes his generation⁸ messes
 To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
 Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,
 As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent. Good my liege,—

Lear. Peace, Kent !

Come not between the dragon and his wrath :
 I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest
 On her kind nursery.—Hence, and avoid my sight ?—

[To Cordelia.]⁹

So,

⁷ i. e. from this time. STEEVENS.

⁸ i. e. his children. MALONE.

⁹ [To Cordelia.] As Mr. Heath supposes, to Kent. For in the next words Lear sends for France and Burgundy to offer Cordelia without a dowry. STEEVENS.

Mr. M. Mason observes, that Kent did not yet deserve such treatment from the King, as the only words he had uttered were "Good my liege." REED.

Surely

So be my grave my peace, as here I give
 Her father's heart from her!—Call France;—Who stirs?
 Call Burgundy.—Cornwall, and Albany,
 With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:
 Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
 I do invest you jointly with my power,
 Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
 That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,
 With reservation of an hundred knights,
 By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
 Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
 The name, and all the additions to a king;²
 The sway,
 Revenue, execution of the rest,³
 Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,
 This coronet part between you. [*giving the crown.*]

Kent. Royal Lear,
 Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
 Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,
 As my great patron thought on in my prayers,⁴—
Lear. The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft.
Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
 The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly,
 When Lear is mad. What would'st thou do, old man?
 Think'st thou, that duty shall have dread to speak,
 When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound,
 When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom;
 And, in thy best consideration, check
 This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgement,
 Thy youngest daughter dost not love thee least;

Nor

Surely such quick transitions or inconsistencies, which ever they are called, are perfectly suited to Lear's character. I have no doubt that the direction now given is right. Kent has hitherto said nothing that could extort even from the cholerick king so harsh a sentence, having only interposed in the mildest manner. Afterwards indeed, when he remonstrates with more freedom, and calls Lear a madman, the king exclaims—
 “Out of my sight!” MALONE.

² All the titles belonging to a king. MALONE.

³ The execution of the rest is, I suppose, all the other business.

JOHNSON.

⁴ An allusion to the custom of clergymen praying for their patrons, in what is commonly called the bidding prayer. HENLEY.

Nor are those empty-hearted, whose low sound
Reverbs⁵ no hollowness.

Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more.

Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thine enemies;⁶ nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.

Lear. Out of my sight!

Kent. See better, Lear; and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye.⁷

Lear. Now, by Apollo,⁸—

Kent. Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

Lear. O, vassal! miscreant!

[*laying his hand on his sword.*]

Alb. Corn. Dear sir, forbear.

Kent. Do;

Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift;
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee, thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant!

On thine allegiance hear me!—

Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,

(Which

⁵ This is perhaps a word of the poet's own making, meaning the same as *reverberates*. STEEVENS.

⁶ I never regarded my life, as my own, but merely as a thing of which I had the possession not the property; and which was entrusted to me as a *pawn* or pledge, to be employed in *waging* war against your enemies.

STEEVENS.

I never considered my life as of more value than that of the commonest of your subjects. A *pawn* in chess is a *common man*, in contradistinction to the *knight*; and Shakspeare has several allusions to this game.

HENDEY.

⁷ The *blank* is the *white* or exact mark at which the arrow is shot. See better, says Kent, and keep me always in your view. JOHNSON.

⁸ Bladud, Lear's father, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, attempting to fly, fell on the temple of Apollo, and was killed. MALONE.

Are we to understand from this circumstance, that the son swears by Apollo, because the father broke his neck on the temple of that deity?

STEEVENS.

(Which we durst never yet,) and, with strain'd pride,⁹
 To come betwixt our sentence and our power;²
 (Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,)
 Our potency made good,³ take thy reward.
 Five days we do allot thee, for provision
 To shield thee from diseases⁴ of the world;
 And, on the sixth, to turn thy hated back
 Upon our kingdom: if, on the tenth day following,
 Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
 The moment is thy death: Away! By Jupiter,⁵
 This shall not be revok'd.

Kent. Fare thee well, king: since thus thou wilt appear,
 Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.—

The

⁹ The oldest copy reads—*strayed pride*; that is, *pride exorbitant*; pride passing due bounds. JOHNSON.

² *Power*, for execution of the sentence. WARBURTON.

Rather, as Mr. Edwards observes, *our power to execute that sentence.*

STEEVENS.

³ *As thou hast come with unreasonable pride between the sentence which I had passed, and the power by which I shall execute it, take thy reward in another sentence which shall make good, shall establish, shall maintain, that power.*

Mr. Davies thinks, that *our potency made good*, relates only to *our place*.—Which our nature cannot bear, nor our *place*, without departure from the *potency* of that place. This is easy and clear.—Lear, who is characterized as hot, heady, and violent, is, with very just observation of life, made to entangle himself with vows, upon any sudden provocation to vow revenge, and then to plead the obligation of a vow in defence of implacability. JOHNSON.

In *Othello* we have again nearly the same language:

“My spirit and my place have in them power—

“To make this bitter to thee.” MALONE.

⁴ Thus the quartos. The folio has *disasters*. The alteration, I believe, was made by the editor, in consequence of his not knowing the meaning of the original word. *Diseases*, in old language, meant the slighter inconveniencies, troubles, or distresses of the world. The provision that Kent could make in five days, might in some measure guard him against the *diseases* of the world, but could not shield him from its *disasters*. MALONE.

Which word be retained is, in my opinion, quite immaterial. Such recollection as an interval of five days will afford to a considerate person, may surely enable him in some degree to provide against the *disasters*, (i. e. the calamities,) of the world. STEEVENS.

⁵ Shakspeare makes his Lear too much a mythologist: he had Hecate and Apollo before. JOHNSON.

K I N G L E A R.

The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,
[To CORDELIA]
 That justly think'st, and hast most rightly said!—
 And your large speeches may your deeds approve,
[To REGAN and GONERIL]
 That good effects may spring from words of love.—
 Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;
 He'll shape his old course⁶ in a country new. [Exit.]

Re-enter GLOSTER; with FRANCE, BURGUNDY, and Attendants.

Glo. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

Lear. My lord of Burgundy,
 We first address towards you, who with this king
 Hath rivall'd for our daughter; What, in the least,
 Will you require in present dower with her,
 Or cease your quest of love?⁷

Bur. Most royal majesty,
 I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd.
 Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
 When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;⁸
 But now her price is fall'n: Sir, there she stands;
 If aught within that little, seeming⁹ substance,
 Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,
 And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
 She's there, and she is yours.

Bur. I know no answer.

Lear. Sir,
 Will you, with those infirmities she owes,²
 Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
Dower'd

⁶ He will follow his old maxims; he will continue to act upon the same principles. JOHNSON.

⁷ *Quest of love* is *amorous expedition*. The term originated from Romance. A quest was the expedition in which a knight was engaged. This phrase is often to be met with in *The Faëry Queen*. STEEVENS.

⁸ We esteemed her worthy of that dowry, which, as you say, we promised to give her. MALONE.

⁹ —[*seeming*]— is *beautiful*. JOHNSON.

Seeming rather means *specious*. STEEVENS.

² i. e. is possessed of. STEEVENS.

Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?

Bur. — Pardon me, royal sir;

Election makes not up on such conditions.³

Lear. Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that made
— me,

I tell you all her wealth.—For you, great king,

[To FRANCE.

I would not from your love make such a stray,

To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you

To avert your liking a more worthier way,

Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed

Almost to acknowledge hers.

France.

This is most strange!

That she, that even but now was your best object,

The argument of your praise, balm of your age,

Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time

Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle

So many folds of favour! Sure, her offence

Must be of such unnatural degree,

That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection

Fall into taint: ⁴ which to believe of her,

Must be a faith, that reason without miracle

Could never plant in me.

Cor.

I yet beseech your majesty,

(If for I want that glib and oily art,

To speak and purpose not; since what I well intend,

I'll do't before I speak,) that you make known

It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,

No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,

That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour:

But

³ To make up signifies to complete, to conclude; as, *they made up the bargain*; but in this sense it has, I think, always the subject noun after it. To make up, in familiar language, is neutrally, *to come forward, to make advances*, which, I think, is meant here. JOHNSON.

I should read the line thus:—

Election makes not, upon such conditions. M. MASON.

Election makes not up, I conceive, means, Election comes not to a decision; in the same sense as when we say, “I have made up my mind on that subject.” MALONE.

⁴ Taint is a term belonging to falconry. STEEVENS.

But even for want of that, for which I am richer;
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
That I am glad I have not, though, not to have it,
Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear. ————— Better thou

Hadst not been born, than not to have pleas'd me better.

France. Is it but this? a tardiness in nature,
Which often leaves the history unspoke,
That it intends to do?—My lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love is not love,
When it is mingled with respects,⁵ that stand
Aloof from the entire point.⁶ Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

Bur. ————— Royal Lear,

Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. ————— Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

Bur. I am sorry then, you have so lost a father,
That you must lose a husband.

Cor. ————— Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:
Be it lawful, I take up what's cast away.
Gods, gods! 'tis strange, that from their cold'st neglect
My love should kindle to inflam'd respect.—
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:
Not all the dukes of wat'rish Burgundy
Shall buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.—
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:

Thou

⁵ i. e. with cautious and prudential considerations. MALONE.

⁶ Single, unmixed with other considerations. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson is right. The meaning of the passage is, that his love
wants something to mark its sincerity;

“Who seeks for aught in love but love alone. STEEVENS.

Thou lovest here,⁷ a better where to find.

Lear. Thou hast her, France : let her be thine; for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of hers again :—Therefore be gone,
Without our grace, our love, our benison.—
Come, noble Burgundy.

[*Flourish.* *Exeunt* LEAR, BURGUNDY, CORNWALL,
ALBANY, GLOSTER, and Attendants.

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you : I know you what you are ;
And, like a sister, am most loath to call
Your faults, as they are nam'd. Use well our father :
To your professed bosoms I commit him :
But yet, alas ! stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So farewell to you both.

Gon. Prescribe not us our duties.

Reg. Let your study
Be, to content your lord ; who hath receiv'd you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

Cor. Time shall unfold what plaited cunning⁸ hides ;
Who cover faults,⁹ at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper !

France. Come, my fair Cordelia.

[*Exeunt* FRANCE and CORDELIA.

Gon. Sister, it is not a little I have to say, of what most
nearly appertains to us both. I think our father will hence
to-night.

Reg. That's most certain, and with you ; next month with
us.

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is ; the observa-
tion we have made of it hath not been little : he always
loved

⁷ *Here* and *where* have the power of nouns. Thou lovest this residence
to find a better residence in another place. JOHNSON.

⁸ i. e. complicated, involved cunning. JOHNSON.

⁹ In this passage Cordelia is made to allude to a passage in Scripture:
Prov. xxviii. 13. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper : but whose
confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy." HENLEY.

loved our sister most; and with what poor judgement he hath now cast her off, appears too grossly.

Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age: yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long-engrafted condition,⁹ but, therewithal, the unruly waywardness that infirm and cholerick years bring with them.

Reg. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him, as this of Kent's banishment.

Gon. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. Pray you, let us hit² together: If our father carry authority with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

Reg. We shall further think of it.

Gon. We must do something, and i' the heat.³ [Exeunt.]

S C E N E II.

A Hall in the Earl of Gloster's Castle.

Enter EDMUND, with a letter.

Edm. Thou, nature, art my goddess; ⁴ to thy law
My services are bound: Wherefore should I

Stand

⁹ i. e. of *qualities* of mind, confirmed by long habit. MALONE.

² i. e. let us agree. STEEVENS.

³ i. e. we must strike while the iron's hot. STEEVENS.

⁴ Edmund only speaks of *nature* in opposition to *custom*, and not (as Dr. Warburton supposes) to the existence of a *God*. Edmund means only, as he came not into the world as *custom* or *law* had prescribed, so he had nothing to do but to follow *nature* and her laws, which make no difference between legitimacy and illegitimacy, between the eldest and the youngest.

To contradict Dr. Warburton's assertion yet more strongly, Edmund concludes this very speech by an invocation to heaven.

"Now gods stand up for bastards!" STEEVENS.

Edmund calls *nature* his goddess, for the same reason that we call a bastard a *natural* son: one, who according to the law of nature, is the child of his father, but according to those of civil society is *nullius filius*.

M. MASON.

Stand in the plague of custom ;⁵ and permit
 The curiosity of nations⁶ to deprive me,⁷
 For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-shines
 Lag of a brother ?⁸ Why bastard ? wherefore base ?
 When my dimensions are as well compact,
 My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
 As honest madam's issue ? Why brand they us
 With base ? with baseness ? bastardy ? base, base ?
 Who, in the lusty stealth of nature,⁹ take
 More composition and fierce quality,

Than

⁵ The word *plague* is in all the old copies: I can scarcely think it right, nor can I yet reconcile myself to *plage*, the emendation proposed by Dr. Warburton, though I have nothing better to offer. JOHNSON.

The meaning is plain, though oddly expressed. Wherefore should I acquiesce, submit tamely to the plagues and injustice of custom ?

Shakspeare seems to mean by the *plague of custom*, Wherefore should I remain in a situation where I shall be plagued and tormented only in consequence of the contempt with which custom regards those who are not the issue of a lawful bed ? Dr. Warburton defines *plage* to be *the place, the country, the boundary of custom*; a word, I believe, to be found only in Chaucer. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Curiosity*, in the time of Shakspeare, was a word that signified *an over-nice scrupulousness* in manners, dress, &c. STEEVENS.

By "the *curiosity of nations*" Edmund means the *nicety*, the *strictness* of civil institution. So, when Hamlet is about to prove that the dust of Alexander might be employed to stop a bung hole, Horatio says, "that were to consider the matter too *curiously*." M. MASON.

⁷ To *deprive* was, in our author's time, synonymous to *disinberit*.

STEEVENS.

⁸ Edmund inveighs against the tyranny of custom, in two instances, with respect to younger brothers, and to bastards. In the former he must not be understood to mean himself, but the argument becomes general by implying more than is said, *Wherefore should I or any man*. HANMER.

⁹ How much the following lines are in character, may be seen by that monstrous wish of Vanini, the Italian atheist, in his tract *De admirandis Naturæ*, &c. printed at Paris, 1616, the very year our poet died. "O utinam extra legitimum & connubialem thorum essem procreatus ! Ita enim progenitores mei in venerem incaluisent ardentius, ac cumulatim affatimque generosa semina contulissent, è quibus ego formæ blanditiæ & elegantiam, robustas corporis vires, mentemque innubilem consequutus fuisset. At quia conjugatorum sum soboles, his orbatus sum bonis." Had the book been published but ten or twenty years sooner, who would not have believed that Shakspeare alluded to this passage ? But the divinity of his genius foretold, as it were, what such an atheist as Vanini would say, when he wrote upon such a subject. WARBURTON.

Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
 Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
 Got 'tween asleep and wake?—Well then,
 Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
 Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund,
 As to the legitimate:—Fine word,—legitimate!
 Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
 And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
 Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:—
 Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOSTER.

Glo. Kent banish'd thus! And France in choler parted!
 And the king gone to-night! subscrib'd his power!²
 Confin'd to exhibition!³ All this done
 Upon the gad!⁴—Edmund! How now? what news?

Edm. So please your lordship, none.

[putting up the letter.]

Glo. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

Edm. I know no news, my lord.

Glo. What paper were you reading?

Edm. Nothing, my lord.

Glo. No? What needed then that terrible despatch of it
 into your pocket? the quality of nothing hath not such need
 to hide itself. Let's see: Come, if it be nothing, I shall not
 need spectacles.

Edm. I beseech you, sir, pardon me: it is a letter from
 my brother, that I have not all o'er-read; for so much as I
 have perused, I find it not fit for your over-looking.

Glo.

² To subscribe, is, to transfer by signing or *subscribing* a writing of testimony. We now use the term, He *subscribed* forty pounds to the new building. JOHNSON.

To *subscribe* in Shakspeare is to *yield*, or *surrender*. So, afterwards:
 "—You owe me no *subscription*." MALONE.

The folio reads—*prescribed*. STEEVENS.

³ —*exhibition!*] is *allowance*. The term is yet used in the universities. JOHNSON.

⁴ To do upon the *gad*, is, to act by the sudden stimulation of caprice, as cattle run madding when they are stung by the gad fly. JOHNSON.

Done upon the *gad* is done suddenly, or, as before, while the iron is hot. A *gad* is an iron bar. RITSON.

Glo. Give me the letter, sir.

Edm. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

Glo. Let's see, let's see.

Edm. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.⁵

Glo. [reads.] *This policy, and reverence of age, makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us, till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond⁶ bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny; who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, Edgar.—Humph—Conspiracy!—Sleep till I waked him,—you should enjoy half his revenue,—My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in?—When came this to you? Who brought it?*

Edm. It was not brought me, my lord, there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

Glo. You know the character to be your brother's?

Edm. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

Glo. It is his.

Edm. It is his hand, my lord; but, I hope, his heart is not in the contents.

Glo. Hath he never heretofore founded you in this business?

Edm. Never, my lord: But I have often heard him maintain

⁵ Though *taste* may stand in this place, yet I believe we should read—*assay* or *test* of my virtue: they are both metallurgical terms, and properly joined. JOHNSON.

Essay and *Taste*, are both terms from royal tables. Mr. Henley observes, that in the eastern parts of this kingdom the word *say* is still retained in the same sense. STEEVENS.

To *assay* not only signified to make trial of coin, but to *taste* before another; *prælibo*. In either sense of the word might be used here.

MALONE.

⁶ Weak and foolish. JOHNSON.

tain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

Glo. O villain, villain!—His very opinion in the letter!—Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish!—Go, firrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him:—Abominable villain!—Where is he?

Edm. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother, till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour, and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honour, and to no other pretence⁷ of danger.

Glo. Think you so?

Edm. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Glo. He cannot be such a monster.

Edm. Nor is not, sure.

Glo. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him.—Heaven and earth!—Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him,⁸ I pray you: frame the business after your own wisdom: I would unstate myself, to be in a due resolution.⁹

Edm.

⁷ *Prétence* is design, purpose. JOHNSON.

⁸ I once thought it should be read, *you* into him; but, perhaps, it is a familiar phrase, like *do me this*. JOHNSON.

⁹ i. e. I will throw aside all consideration of my relation to him, that I may act as justice requires. WARBURTON.

Such is this learned man's explanation. I take the meaning to be rather this, *Do you frame the business*, who can act with less emotion; *I would unstate myself*; it would in me be departure from the paternal character, *to be in a due resolution*, to be settled and composed on such an occasion. The words *would* and *should* are in old language often confounded. JOHNSON.

It seems to me, that *I would unstate myself* in this passage means simply *I would give my estate* (including rank as well as fortune.)

TYRWHITT.

Both

Edm. I will seek him, sir, presently; convey² the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

Glo. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: Though the wisdom of nature³ can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond crack'd between son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the king falls from his bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time: Machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves!—Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully:—And the noble and true-hearted Kent banish'd! his offence, honesty!—Strange! strange! [Exit.]

Edm. This is the excellent foppery of the world!⁴ that, when

Both Warburton and Johnson have mistaken the sense of this passage, and their explanations are such as the words cannot possibly imply. Gloucester cannot bring himself thoroughly to believe what Edmund told him of Edgar. He says, “Can he be such a monster?” He afterwards desires Edmund to sound his intentions, and then says, he would give all he possessed to be certain of the truth; for that is the meaning of the words *to be in a due resolution*. Othello uses the word *resolved* in the same sense more than once. M. MASON.

Though to *resolve* in Shakspeare's time certainly sometimes meant to *satisfy, declare, or inform*, I have never found the substantive *resolution* used in that sense: and even had the word ever borne that sense, the author could not have written, “—to be in a due resolution, but must have written *to attain a due resolution*.” Who ever wish'd “to be in due information” on any point? MALONE.

Mr. Ritson's explanation of the word—*resolution*, concurs with that of Mr. M. Mason, STEEVENS.

² To *convey* is to *carry through*; in this place it is to *manage artfully*: we say of a juggler, that he has a clean *conveyance*. JOHNSON.

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when we are sick in fortune, (often the surfeit of our own behaviour,) we make guilty of our disasters, the sun, the moon, and

date of its first performance well considered, it would be found that something or other happened at that time which gave a more than ordinary-run to this deceit, as these words seems to intimate; *I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.* However this be, an impious cheat, which had so little foundation in nature or reason, so detestable an original, and such fatal consequences on the manners of the people, who were at that time strangely besotted with it, certainly deserved the severest lash of satire. It was a fundamental in this noble science, that whatever seeds of good dispositions the infant unborn might be endowed with either from nature, or traductively from its parents, yet if, at the time of its birth, the delivery was by any casualty so accelerated or retarded, as to fall in with the predominancy of a malignant constellation, that momentary influence would entirely change its nature, and bias it to all the contrary ill qualities: so wretched and monstrous an opinion did it set out with. But the Italians, to whom we owe this, as well as most other unnatural crimes and follies of these latter ages, fomented its original impiety to the most detestable height of extravagance. Petrus Aponensis, an Italian physician of the 13th century, assures us that those prayers which are made to God when the moon is in conjunction with Jupiter in the Dragon's tail, are infallibly heard. The great Milton, with a just indignation of this impiety, hath, in his *Paradise Regained*, satirized it in a very beautiful manner, by putting these reveries into the mouth of the devil. Book IV. v. 383. Nor could the licentious Rabelais himself forbear to ridicule this impious dotage, which he does with exquisite address and humour, where in the fable which he so agreeably tells from Æsop, of the man who applied to Jupiter for the loss of his hatchet, he makes those who, on the poor man's good success, had projected to trick Jupiter by the same petition, a kind of astrologick atheists, who ascribed this good fortune, that they imagined they were now all going to partake of, to the influence of some rare conjunction and configuration of the stars. "Hen, hen, disent ils—Et doncques, telle est au temps present la revolution des Cieulx, la constellation des Astres, & aspect des Planetes, que quiconque coignée perdra, soubdain deviendra ainsi riche?"—*Nou Prol. du IV. Livre.*—But to return to Shakspeare. So blasphemous a delusion, therefore, it became the honesty of our poet to expose. But it was a tender point, and required managing. For this impious juggle had in his time a kind of religious reverence paid to it. It was therefore to be done obliquely; and the circumstances of the scene furnished him with as good an opportunity as he could wish. The persons in the drama are all Pagans, so that as, in compliance to custom, his good characters were not to speak ill of judicial astrology, they could on account of their religion give no reputation to it. But in order to expose it the more, he with great judgement, makes these Pagans fatalists; as appears by these words of Lear:

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and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools, by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail; and my nativity was under *ursa major*; so that it follows, I am rough and lecherous — Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar—

Enter EDGAR.

and pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy: My cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam.—O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! *fa, sol, la, mi.*⁶

Edg.

“By all the operations of the orbs,

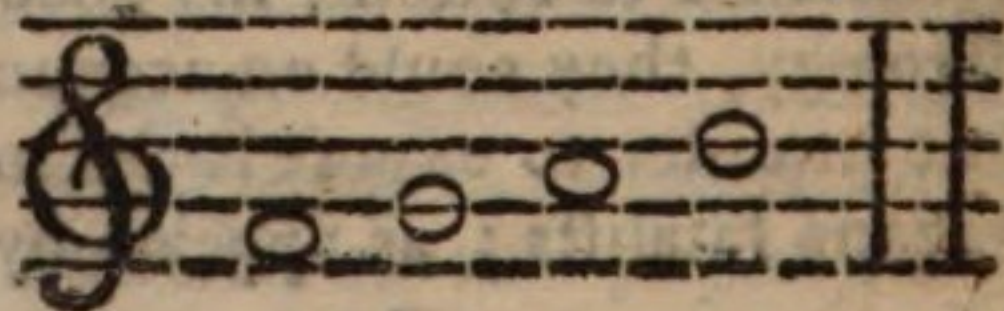
“From whom we do exist and cease to be.”

For the doctrine of fate is the true foundation of judicial astrology. Having thus discredited it by the very commendations given to it, he was in no danger of having his direct satire against it mistaken, by its being put (as he was obliged, both in paying regard to custom, and in following nature) into the mouth of the villain and atheist, especially when he has added such force of reason to his ridicule, in the words referred to in the beginning of the note. *WARBURTON.*

⁵ I think this passage was intended to ridicule the very awkward conclusions of our old comedies, where the persons of the scene make their entry inartificially, and just when the poet wants them on the stage.

WARNER.

⁶ The commentators, not being musicians, have regarded this passage perhaps as unintelligible nonsense, and therefore left it as they found it, without bestowing a single conjecture on its meaning and import. Shakespeare however shows by the context that he was well acquainted with the property of these syllables in solmisation, which imply a series of sounds so unnatural, that ancient musicians prohibited their use. The monkish writers on musick say, *mi contra fa est diabolus*: the interval *fa mi*, including a *tritonus*, or sharp 4th, consisting of three tones without the intervention of a semi-tone, expressed in the modern scale by the letters F G A B, would form a musical phrase extremely disagreeable to the ear. Edmund, speaking of eclipses as portents and prodigies compares the dislocation of events, the *times being out of joint*, to the unnatural and offensive sounds, *fa sol la mi.* *DR. BURNEY.*



Edg. How now, brother Edmund? What serious contemplation are you in?

Edm. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

Edg. Do you busy yourself with that?

Edm. I promise you,⁶ the effects he writes of, succeed unhappily; as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edg. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

Edm. Come, come; when saw you my father last?

Edg. Why, the night gone by.

Edm. Spake you with him?

Edg. Ay, two hours together.

Edm. Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him, by word, or countenance?

Edg. None at all.

Edm. Bethink yourself, wherein you may have offended him: and at my entreaty, forbear his presence, till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure; which at this instant so rageth in him, that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

Edg. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edm. That's my fear. I pray you, have a continent forbearance, till the speed of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak: Pray you, go; there's my key:—If you do stir abroad, go arm'd.

Edg.

⁶ The folio edition commonly differs from the first quarto, by augmentations or insertions, but in this place it varies by omission, and by the omission of something which naturally introduces the following dialogue. It is easy to remark, that in this speech, which ought, I think, to be inserted as it now is in the text, Edmund, with the common craft of fortune-tellers, mingles the past and future, and tells of the future only what he already foreknows by confederacy, or can attain by probable conjecture.

JOHNSON.

Edg. Arm'd, brother?

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best; go arm'd; I am no honest man, if there be any good meaning towards you: I have told you what I have seen and heard, but faintly; nothing like the image and horror of it: Pray you, away.

Edg. Shall I hear from you anon?

Edm. I do serve you in this business.— [Exit EDGAR.
A credulous father, and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy!—I see the business.—
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:
All with me's meet, that I can fashion fit. [Exit.

SCENE III.

A Room in the Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter GONERIL and STEWARD.

Gon. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Gon. By day and night! he wrongs me; every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other,
That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle:—When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him; say, I am sick:—
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.

Stew. He's coming, madam; I hear him. [Horns within.

Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows; I'd have it come to question:
If he dislike it, let him to my sister,
Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
Not to be over-rul'd. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities,
That he hath given away!—Now, by my life,
Old fools are babes again; and must be us'd

With checks, as flatteries,—when they are seen abus'd.⁸
Remember what I have said.

Stew. Very well, madam.

Gon. And let his knights have colder looks among you;
What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so:
I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
That I may speak:—I'll write straight to my sister,
To hold my very course:—Prepare for dinner. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Hall in the same.

Enter KENT, disguised.

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech diffuse,⁹ my good intent

May

⁸ The sense seems to be this: *Old men must be treated with checks*, when as they are seen to be deceived with flatteries: or, when they are weak enough to be seen abused by flatteries, they are then weak enough to be used with checks. There is a play of the words *used* and *abused*. To *abuse* is, in our author, very frequently the same as to *deceive*. This construction is harsh and ungrammatical; Shakspeare perhaps thought it vicious, and chose to throw away the lines rather than correct them, nor would now thank the officiousness of his editors, who restore what they do not understand. JOHNSON.

The plain meaning, I believe, is—old fools must be used with checks, as flatteries must be check'd when they are made a bad use of. TOLLET.

I understand this passage thus. *Old fools—must be used with checks*, as well as flatteries, when they [i. e. flatteries] are seen to be used.

TYRWHITT.

I think Mr. Tyrwhitt's interpretation the true one. MALONE.

The sentiment of Goneril is obviously this:—"When old fools will not yield to the appliances of persuasion, harsh treatment must be employed to compel their submission." When flatteries are seen to be abused by them, checks must be used, as the only means left to subdue them. HENLEY.

⁹ We must suppose that Kent advances looking on his disguise. This circumstance very naturally leads to his speech, which otherwise would have no very apparent introduction. *If I can change my speech as well as I have changed my dress.* To *diffuse* speech, signifies to *disorder* it, and so to *disguise* it. Or, it may mean to *speak broad*, with a clownish accent.

STEEVENS.

Diffused certainly meant, in our author's time, wild, irregular, heterogeneous. MALONE.

May carry through itself to that full issue
 For which I raz'd my likenefs.—Now, banish'd Kent,
 If thou can'st serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
 (So may it come!) thy master, whom thou lov'st,
 Shall find thee full of labours.

Horns within. Enter LEAR, Knights, and Attendants.

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go, get it ready.
 [*Exit an Attendant.*] How now, what art thou?

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess? What would'st thou with us?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve him truly, that will put me in trust; to love him that is honest; to converse with him that is wise, and says little;³ to fear judgement; to fight, when I cannot choose; and to eat no fish.⁴

Lear. What art thou?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

Lear. If thou be as poor for a subject, as he is for a king, thou art poor enough. What would'st thou?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Who would'st thou serve?

Kent.

³ To *converse* signifies immediately and properly to *keep company*, not to *discourse* or *talk*. His meaning is, that he chuses for his companions men of reserve and caution; men who are not tatlers nor tale-bearers.

JOHNSON.

We still say in the same sense—he had criminal *conversation* with her—meaning *commerce*. MALONE.

⁴ In queen Elizabeth's time the Papists were esteemed, and with good reason, enemies to the government. Hence the proverbial phrase of, *He's an honest man, and eats no fish*; to signify he's a friend to the government and a Protestant. The eating fish, on a religious account, being then esteemed such a badge of popery, that when it was enjoin'd for a season by act of parliament, for the encouragement of the fish-towns, it was thought necessary to declare the reason; hence it was called *Cecil's fast*. To this disgraceful badge of popery Fletcher alludes in his *Woman-bater*, who makes the courtezan say, when Lazarillo, in search of the umbrano's head, was seized at her house by the intelligencers for a traytor: “Gentlemen, I am glad you have discovered him. He should not have eaten under my roof for twenty pounds. And sure I did not like him, when he *called for fish*.” And Marston's *Dutch Courtezan*: “I trust I am none of the wicked that *eat fish a fridays*.” WAREBURYTON.

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance, which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly: that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualify'd in; and the best of me is diligence.

Lear. How old art thou?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing; nor so old, to dote on her for any thing: I have years on my back forty-eight.

Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me; if I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet.—Dinner, ho, dinner!—Where's my knave? my fool? Go you, and call my fool hither:

Enter STEWARD.

You, you, firrah, where's my daughter?

Stew. So please you,—

[*Exit.*

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back.—Where's my fool, ho?—I think the world's asleep.—How now? where's that mongrel?

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me, when I call'd him?

Knight. Sir, he answer'd me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not!

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgement, your highness is not entertain'd with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears, as well in the general dependants, as in the duke himself also, and your daughter.

Lear. Ha! say'st thou so?

Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken;

taken; for my duty cannot be silent, when I think your highness is wrong'd.

Lear. Thou but remember'st me of mine own conception: I have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity,⁵ than as a very pretence⁶ and purpose of unkindness: I will look further into't.—But where's my fool? I have not seen him this two days.

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.⁷

Lear. No more of that; I have noted it well.—Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her.—Go you, call hither my fool.—

Re-enter STEWARD.

O, you sir, you sir, come you hither: Whom am I, sir?

Stew. My lady's father.

Lear. My lady's father! my lord's knave: you whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

Stew. I am none of this, my lord; I beseech you, pardon me.

Lear. Do you bandy looks⁸ with me, you rascal?

[striking him.]

Stew. I'll not be struck, my lord.

Kent. Nor tripped neither; you base foot-ball player.

[tripping up his heels.]

Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away; I'll teach you differences; away, away: If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry: but away: go to; Have you wisdom? so.

[pushes the Steward out.]

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service.

[giving KENT money.]

Enter

⁵ By this phrase King Lear means, I believe, a *punilious jealousy*, resulting from a scrupulous watchfulness of his own dignity. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Pretence* in Shakspeare generally signifies *design*. STEEVENS.

⁷ This is an endearing circumstance in the Fool's character, and creates such an interest in his favour, as his wit alone might have failed to procure for him. STEEVENS.

⁸ A metaphor from *Tennis*. STEEVENS.

Enter Fool.

Fool. Let me hire him too ;—Here's my coxcomb.

[*giving KENT his cap.*

Lear. How now, my pretty knave? how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why? For taking one's part that is out of favour: Nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly: ⁹ There, take my coxcomb: ² Why, this fellow has banish'd two of his daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will; if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb.—How now, nuncle? ³ 'Would I had two coxcombs ⁴ and two daughters. ⁵

Lear. Why, my boy?

Fool. If I gave them all my living, ⁶ I'd keep my coxcombs myself: There's mine; beg another of thy daughters. ⁷

Lear. Take heed, firrah; the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog that must to kennel; he must be whipp'd out, when Lady, the brach, ⁸ may stand by the fire and stink.

Lear.

⁹ i. e. be turned out of doors, and exposed to the inclemency of the weather. FARMER.

² Meaning his cap, called so, because on the top of the fool or jester's cap was sewed a piece of red cloth, resembling the comb of a cock. The word, afterwards, was used to denote a vain, conceited, meddling fellow.

WARBURTON.

³ *Aunt* is a term of respect in France. And at this day the lower people in Shropshire call the Judge of assize—"my nuncle the Judge."

VAILLANT.

⁴ Two fools caps, intended, as it seems, to mark double folly in the man that gives all to his daughters. JOHNSON.

⁵ Perhaps we should read—*an'* two daughters; i. e. *if*. FARMER.

⁶ *Living* in Shakspeare's time signified estate, or property.

MALONE.

⁷ The fool means to say, that it is by *begging* only that the old king can obtain any thing from his daughters: even a badge of folly in having reduced himself to such a situation. MALONE.

⁸ *Brach* is a bitch of the hunting kind.

"Nos

Lear. A pestilent gall to me!

Fool. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.

Fool. Mark it, nuncle:—

Have more than thou showest,
 Speak less than thou knowest,
 Lend less than thou owest,⁹
 Ride more than thou goest,
 Learn more than thou trowest,²
 Set less than thou throwest;
 Leave thy drink and thy whore,
 And keep in-a-door,
 And thou shalt have more
 Than two tens to a score.

Lear. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer; you gave me nothing for't: Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. Pr'ythee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to; he will not believe a fool. [To KENT.]

Lear. A bitter fool!

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool!

Lear. No, lad; ³ teach me.

Fool.

“Nos quidem hodie *brach* dicimus de cane fœminea, quæ leporem ex odore persequitur. Spelm. Gloss. in voce *Bracco*.”

Dr. Letherland, on the margin of Dr. Warburton's edition, proposed *lady's brach*, i. e. *favour'd animal*. The third quarto has a much more unmannerly reading, which I would not wish to establish: but the other quarto editions concur in reading *lady oth'e brach*. *Lady* is still a common name for a hound. STEEVENS.

⁹ That is, *do not lend all that thou hast*. To *owe*, in old English, is to *possess*. If *owe* be taken for *to be in debt*, the more prudent precept would be:

Lend *more* than thou owest. JOHNSON.

² To *trow*, is an old word which signifies to *believe*. The precept is admirable. WARBURTON.

³ This dialogue, from *No, lad, teach me*, down to *Give me an egg*, was restored from the first edition by Mr. Theobald. It is omitted in the folio, perhaps for political reasons, as it seemed to censure the monopolies. JOHNSON.

Fool. That lord, that counsel'd thee
 To give away thy land,
 Come place him here by me,—
 Or do thou for him stand:
 The sweet and bitter fool
 Will presently appear;
 The one in motley here,
 'The other found out there.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, 'faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't: ⁴ and ladies too, they will not let me have all fool to myself; they'll be snatching.—Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear. What two crowns shall they be?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back over the dirt: Thou had'st little wit in thy bald crown, when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipp'd that first finds it so.

Fools had ne'er less grace in a year; ⁵ [Singing.
For wise men are grown foppish;
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.

Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

Fool. I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mother: ⁶ for when thou gavest them the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches, *Then*

⁴ A satire on the gross abuses of monopolies at that time; and the corruption and avarice of the courtiers, who commonly went shares with the patentee. *WARBURTON.*

⁵ There never was a time when fools were less in favour; and the reason is, that they were never so little wanted, for wise men now supply their place. Such I think is the meaning. *JOHNSON.*

⁶ i. e. when you invested them with the authority of a mother.

MALONE.

*Then they for sudden joy did weep,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,⁷
And go the fools among.*

[Singing.]

Pr'ythee, nuncle, keep a school-master that can teach thy fool to lie; I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. If you lie, firrah, we'll have you whipp'd.

Fool. I marvel, what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipp'd for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipp'd for lying; and, sometimes, I am whipp'd for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind of thing, than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing in the middle: Here comes one o' the parings.

Enter GONERIL.

Lear. How now, daughter? what makes that frontlet⁸ on? Methinks, you are too much of late i'the frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow, when thou had'st no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure:⁹ I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing.—Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face [*10* GON.] bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum,

He that keeps nor crust nor crum,
Weary of all, shall want some.—

That's

⁷ Little more of this game, than its mere denomination, remains. It is mentioned, however, in Churchyard's *Charitie*, 1593, in company with two other childish plays, which it is not my office to explain:

“Cold parts men plaie, much like old plaine bo-peepe,

“Or counterfait, in-dock-out-nettle, still.” STEEVENS.

⁸ Lear alludes to the *frontlet*, which was anciently part of a woman's dress. STEEVENS.

A *frontlet* was a forehead-cloth, used formerly by ladies at night to render that part smooth. Lear, I suppose, means to say, that Goneril's brow was as completely covered by a frown, as it would be by a frontlet.

MALONE.

⁹ The fool means to say, that Lear, “having pared his wit on both sides, and left nothing in the middle,” is become a mere cypher; which has no arithmetical value, unless preceded or followed by some figure.

MALONE.

That's a sheal'd peascod.²

[pointing to LEAR.]

Gon. Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd fool,
But other of your insolent retinue,
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,
That you protect this course, and put it on³
By your allowance; ⁴ which if you should, the fault
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep;
Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,
Might in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For you trow, nuncle,

The hedge sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,

That it had its head bit off by its young.

So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.⁵

Lear. Are you our daughter?

Gon. Come, sir, I would, you would make use of that
good wisdom whereof I know you are fraught; and put
away

² Now a mere husk, which contains nothing. The outside of a king remains, but all the intrinsic parts of royalty are gone: he has nothing to give. JOHNSON.

The robing of Richard III's effigy in Westminster-abbey is wrought with *peascods open*, and the *peas out*; perhaps an allusion to his being once in full possession of sovereignty, but soon reduced to an empty title.

TOLLET.

³ i. e. promote, push it forward. STEEVENS.

⁴ By your *approbation*. MALONE.

⁵ Dr. Farmer concurs with me in supposing, that the words—*So out went the candle*, &c. are a fragment of some old song. STEEVENS.

Shakspeare's fools are certainly copied from the life. The originals whom he copied were no doubt men of quick parts; lively and sarcastick. Though they were licensed to say any thing, it was still necessary to prevent giving offence, that every thing they said should have a playful air: we may suppose therefore that they had a custom of taking off the edge of too sharp a speech by covering it hastily with the end of an old song, or any glib nonsense that came into the mind. I know no other way of accounting for the incoherent words with which Shakspeare often finishes this fool's speeches. SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

away these dispositions, which of late transform you ⁶ from what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse? —Whoop, Jug! ⁷ I love thee.

Lear. Does any here know me?—Why this is not Lear: dost Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes? Either his notion weakens, or his discernings are lethargied.—Sleeping or waking?—Ha! sure 'tis not so.—Who is it that can tell me who I am?—Lear's shadow? I would learn that; for by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters. ⁸—

Fool.

⁶ Thus the quartos. The folio reads—*transport* you. STEEVENS.

⁷ There are in the fool's speeches several passages which seem to be proverbial allusions, perhaps not now to be understood. JOHNSON.

This, as I am informed, is a quotation from the burthen of an old song. STEEVENS.

⁸ His daughters prove so unnatural, that, if he were only to judge by the reason of things, he must conclude, they cannot be his daughters. This is the thought. But how does his kingship or sovereignty enable him to judge of this matter? The line, by being false pointed, has lost its sense. We should read:

Of sovereignty of knowledge.—

i. e. the understanding. He calls it, by an equally fine phrase, in *Hamlet*,—*Sovereignty of reason*. And it is remarkable that the editors had depraved it there too. WARBURTON.

The difficulty, which must occur to every reader, is, to conceive how *the marks of sovereignty, of knowledge, and of reason*, should be of any use to *persuade Lear that he had, or had not, daughters*. No logick, I apprehend could draw such a conclusion from such premises. This difficulty, however, may be entirely removed, by only pointing the passage thus:—*for by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, I should be false persuaded.—I had daughters.—Your name, fair gentlewoman?*

The chain of Lear's speech being thus untangled, we can clearly trace the succession and connection of his ideas. The undutiful behaviour of his daughter so disconcerts him, that he doubts, by turns, whether she is Goneril, and whether he himself is Lear. Upon her first speech, he only exclaims,

—*Are you our daughter?*

Upon her going on in the same style, he begins to question his own sanity of mind, and even his personal identity. He appeals to the bystanders,

Who is it that can tell me who I am?

I should be glad to be told. For (if I was to judge myself) by the marks

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father. 9

Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Gon.

marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, which once distinguished Lear, (but which I have now lost) I should be false (against my own consciousness) persuaded (that I am not Lear). He then slides to the examination of another distinguishing mark of Lear:

—I bad daughters.

But not able, as it should seem, to dwell upon so tender a subject, he hastily recurs to his first doubt concerning Goneril,—

Your name, fair gentlewoman? TYRWHITT.

This note is written with confidence disproportionate to the conviction which it can bring. Lear might as well know by the marks and tokens arising from sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, that he had or had not daughters, as he could know by any thing else. But says he, if I judge by these tokens, I find the persuasion false by which I long thought myself the father of daughters. JOHNSON.

I cannot approve of Dr. Warburton's manner of pointing this passage, as I do not think that *sovereignty of knowledge* can mean *understanding*; and if it did, what is the difference between understanding and reason? In the passage he quotes from Hamlet, *sovereignty of reason* appears to me to mean, the ruling power, the governance of reason; a sense that would not answer in this place.

Mr. Tyrwhitt's observations are ingenious, but not satisfactory; and as for Dr. Johnson's explanation, though it would be certainly just had Lear expressed himself in the past, and said, "I have been false persuaded I had daughters," it cannot be the just explanation of the passage as it stands. The meaning appears to me to be this:

"Were I to judge from the marks of sovereignty, of knowledge, or of reason, I should be induced to think I had daughters, yet that must be a false persuasion;—It cannot be."

I could not at first comprehend why the tokens of sovereignty should have any weight in determining his persuasion that he had daughters; but, by the marks of sovereignty, he means, those tokens of royalty which his daughters then enjoyed as derived from him. M. MASON.

Lear, it should be remembered, has not parted with all *the marks of sovereignty*. In the midst of his prodigality to his children, he reserved to himself *the name and all the additions to a king*.—Shakspeare often means more than he expresses. Lear has just asked whether he is a shadow. I wish, he adds, to be resolved on this point; for if I were to judge by the marks of sovereignty, and the consciousness of reason, I should be persuaded that I am not a shadow, *but a man, a king, and a father*. But this latter persuasion is false; for those whom I thought my daughters, are *unnatural bags*, and never proceeded from these loins.

As therefore I am not a father, so neither may I be an embodied being; I may yet be a shadow. However, let me be certain. *Your name, fair gentlewoman?* MALONE.

Gon. Come, fir;

This admiration is much o' the favour ²
 Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
 To understand my purposes aright :
 As you are old and reverend, you should be wise :
 Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
 Men so disorder'd, so debauch'd, and bold,
 That this our court, infected with their manners,
 Shows like a riotous inn : epicurism and lust
 Make it more like a tavern, or a brothel,
 Than a grac'd palace. ³ The shame itself doth speak
 For instant remedy : Be then desir'd
 By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
 A little to disquantity your train ;
 And the remainder, that shall still depend, ⁴
 To be such men as may besort your age,
 And know themselves and you.

Lear.

Darkness and devils!—

Saddle my horses ; call my train together. —
 Degenerate bastard ! I'll not trouble thee ;
 Yet have I left a daughter.

Gon. You strike my people ; and your disorder'd rabble
 Make servants of their betters.

Enter ALBANY.

Lear. Woe, that too late repents,—O, fir, are you
 come ?

Is it your will ? [*to ALB.*] Speak, fir.—Prepare my horses.
 Ingratitude ! thou marble-hearted fiend,
 More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child,
 Than the sea-monster ! ⁵

Alb.

¹ *Which*, is on this occasion used with two deviations from present language. It is referred, contrary to the rules of grammarians, to the pronoun *I*, and is employed, according to a mode now obsolete, for *whom*, the accusative case of *who*. STEEVENS.

² i. e. of the complexion. STEEVENS.

³ A palace graced by the presence of a sovereign. WARBURTON.

⁴ *Depend*, for continue in service. WARBURTON.

⁵ Mr. Upton observes, that the sea-monster is the *Hippopotamus*, the hieroglyphical symbol of impiety and ingratitude. Sandys, in his travels, says—"that he killeth his fire, and ravisheth his own dam."

STEEVENS.

Alb. Pray, sir, be patient.

Lear. Detested kite! thou liest: [to GONERIL.
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know;
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name.—O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
Which, like an engine,⁶ wrench'd my frame of nature
From the fix'd place; drew from my heart all love,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in, [striking his head.
And thy dear judgement out!—Go, go, my people.

Alb. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath moved you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord.—Hear, nature, hear;
Dear goddesses, hear! Suspend thy purpose, if
Thou didst intend to make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility!
Dry up in her the organs of increase;
And from her derogate body⁷ never spring
A babe to honour her! If she must teem
Create her child of spleen; that it may live,
And be a thwart⁸ disnatur'd⁹ torment to her!
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
With cadent tears² fret channels in her cheeks;

Turn

⁶ Mr. Edwards conjectures that by an engine is meant the *rack*. He is right. To *engine* is, in Chaucer, to *strain* upon the *rack*.

STEEVENS.

⁷ *Derogate* for *unnatural*. WARBURTON.

Rather, I think, *degraded*; *blasted*. JOHNSON.

Her shrunk and wasted body. MALONE.

Degraded (Dr. Johnson's first explanation) is surely the true one.

STEEVENS.

⁸ *Thwart* as a noun adjective is not frequent in our language, it is however to be found in *Promos* and *Cassandra*, 1578, "Sith fortune *thwart* doth crosse my joys with care." HENDERSON.

⁹ *Disnatur'd* is wanting natural affection. STEEVENS.

² Falling tears. Dr. Warburton would read *cadent*. STEEVENS.

The words—*these hot tears*, in Lear's next speech, may seem to authorize the amendment; but the present reading is right. It is a more severe imprecation to wish, that tears by constant flowing may fret channels

Turn all her mother's pains, and benefits,
 To laughter and contempt ;³ that she may feel
 How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
 To have a thankless child!—Away, away! [Exit.]

Alb. Now, gods, that we adore, whereof comes this?

Gon. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;
 But let his disposition have that scope
 That dotage gives it.

Re-enter LEAR.

Lear. What, fifty of my followers, at a clap!
 Within a fortnight?

Alb. What's the matter, sir?

Lear. I'll tell thee;—Life and death! I am asham'd
 That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus:

[to GONERIL.]

That these hot tears,⁴ which break from me perforce,
 Should make thee worth them.—Blasts and fogs upon thee!
 The untented woundings⁵ of a father's curse

Pierce

nels in the cheeks, which implies a long life of wretchedness, than to wish that those channels should be made by scalding tears, which does not mark the same continuation of misery. M. MASON.

³ “*Her mother's pains*” here signifies, not bodily sufferings, or the throes of child-birth, (with which this “*disnated babe*” being unacquainted, it could not *deride* or *despise* them,) but *maternal cares*; the solicitude of a mother for the welfare of her child.

Benefits mean *good-offices*; her kind and *beneficent* attention to the education of her offspring, &c. Mr. Roderick has, in my opinion, explained both these words wrong. He is equally mistaken in supposing that the sex of this child is ascertained by the word *her*; which clearly relates, not to Goneril's issue, but to herself. “*Her mother's pains*” means—the pains which she (*Goneril*) takes as a mother. MALONE.

⁴ I will transcribe this passage from the first edition, that it may appear to those who are unacquainted with old books, what is the difficulty of revision, and what indulgence is due to those that endeavour to restore corrupted passages.—*That these hot tears, that breake from me perforce, should make the worst blasts and fogs upon the untender woundings of a father's curse, peruse every sence about the old fond eyes, beweepe this cause again, &c.* JOHNSON.

⁵ *Untented* wounds, means wounds in their worst state, not having a *tent* in them to digest them; and may possibly signify here such as will not admit of having a tent put into them for that purpose. One of the quartos reads, *untender*. STEEVENS.

Pierce every sense about thee!—Old fond eyes,
 Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck you out;
 And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
 To temper clay.—Ha! is it come to this?
 Let it be so:—Yet have I left a daughter,
 Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable;
 When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
 She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find,
 That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
 I have cast off for ever; thou shalt, I warrant thee.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, KENT, and Attendants.

Gon. Do you mark that, my lord?

Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
 To the great love I bear you,—

Gon. Pray you, content.—What, Oswald, ho!
 You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master.

[*To the Fool.*

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry, and take the fool
 with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,
 And such a daughter,
 Should sure to the slaughter,
 If my cap would buy a halter;
 So the fool follows after.

[*Exit.*

Gon. This man hath had good counsel:—A hundred
 knights!

'Tis politick, and safe, to let him keep
 At point,⁶ a hundred knights. Yes, that on every dream,
 Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
 He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
 And hold our lives in mercy.—Oswald, I say!—

Alb. Well, you may fear too far.

Gon. Safer than trust:

Let me still take away the harms I fear,
 Not fear still to be taken. I know his heart:
 What he hath utter'd, I have writ my sister;
 If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
 When I have show'd the unfitness;—How now, Oswald?

Enter

⁶ Completely armed, and consequently ready at appointment or command on the slightest notice. STEEVENS.

Enter STEWARD.

What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Gon. Take you some company, and away to horse:
Inform her full of my particular fear;
And thereto add such reasons of your own,
As may compact it more.⁷ Get you gone;
And hasten your return. [*Exit Stew.*] No, no, my lord,
This milky gentleness, and course of yours,
Though I condemn it not, yet, under pardon,
You are much more attack'd⁸ for want of wisdom,
Than prais'd for harmful mildness.

Alb. How far your eyes may pierce, I cannot tell;
Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

Gon. Nay then—

Alb. Well, well; the event.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

Court before the same.

Enter LEAR, KENT, and Fool.

Lear. Go you before to Gloster with these letters: acquaint my daughter no further with any thing you know, than comes from her demand out of the letter: If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there before you.⁹

Kent. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered your letter. [*Exit.*]

Fool. If a man's brains were in his heels, were't not in danger of kibes?

Lear. Ay, boy.

Fool. Then, I pr'ythee, be merry; thy wit shall not go slipshod.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!

Fool.

⁷ Unite one circumstance with another, so as to make a consistent account. JOHNSON.

⁸ It is a common phrase now with parents and governesses: *I'll take you to task*, i. e. *I will reprobend and correct you*. *To be at task*, therefore, is to be liable to *reprobension and correction*. JOHNSON.

⁹ He seems to intend to go to his daughter, but it appears afterwards that he is going to the house of Gloster. JOHNSON.

Fool. Shalt see, thy other daughter will use thee kindly:² for though she's as like this as a crab is like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

Lear. Why, what canst thou tell, my boy?

Fool. She will taste as like this, as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell, why one's nose stands i' the middle of his face?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep his eyes on either side his nose; that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong:³—

Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature.—So kind a father!—Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven, is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed: Thou wouldst make a good fool.

Lear. To take it again perforce!⁴—Monster ingratitude!

Fool.

² The *Fool* uses the word *kindly* here in two senses; it means *affectionately*, and like the rest of her *kind*. M. MASON.

³ He is musing on Cordelia. JOHNSON.

⁴ He is meditating on the resumption of his royalty. JOHNSON.

He is rather meditating on his daughter's having in so violent a manner deprived him of those privileges which before she had agreed to grant him. STEEVENS.

The subject of Lear's meditation is the resumption of that moiety of the kingdom which he had given to Goneril. This was what Albany apprehended, when he replied to the upbraidings of his wife: "Well well; the event:"—what Lear himself projected when he left Goneril to go to Regan:—

"—— Yet I have left a daughter,

"Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable;

"When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails

"She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find,

"That

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou should'st not have been old, before thou hadst been wife.

Lear. O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven! Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!—

Enter Gentleman.

How now! Are the horses ready?

Gent. Ready, my lord.

Lear. Come boy.

Fool. She that is maid now, and laughs at my departure, Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter.^s

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Court within the Castle of the Earl of Gloster.

Enter EDMUND and CURAN, meeting.

Edm. Save thee, Curan.

Cur. And you, sir. I have been with your father; and given him notice, that the duke of Cornwall, and Regan his duchess, will be here with him to-night.

Edm. How comes that?

Cur. Nay, I know not: You have heard of the news abroad;

“That I'll resume the shape, which thou dost think

“I have cast off for ever; thou shalt, I warrant thee.”

And what Curan afterwards refers to, when he asks Edmund: “Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt the dukes of Cornwall and Albany?” HENLEY.

^s This idle couplet is apparently addressed to the females present at the performance of the play; and, not improbably, crept into the play-house copy from the mouth of some buffoon actor, who “spoke more than was set down for him.”

I am aware, that such liberties were exercised by the authors of *Lochrine*, &c; but can such another offensive and extraneous address to the audience be pointed out among all the dramas of Shakspeare?

STEEVENS.

abroad ; I mean, the whisper'd ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments? ⁶

Edm. Not I ; 'Pray you, what are they ?

Cur. Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt the dukes of Cornwall and Albany ?

Edm. Not a word.

Cur. You may then, in time. Fare you well, sir. [*Exit.*

Edm. 'The duke be here to-night ? The better ! Best !
This weaves itself perforce into my business !
My father hath set guard to take my brother ;
And I have one thing, of a queazy question,⁷
Which I must act :—Briefness, and fortune, work !—
Brother, a word ;—descend :—Brother, I say ;

Enter EDGAR.

My father watches :—O sir, fly this place ;
Intelligence is given where you are hid ;
You have now the good advantage of the night :—
Have you not spoken 'gainst the duke of Cornwall ?
He's coming hither ; now, i' the night, i' the haste,
And Regan with him ; Have you nothing said
Upon his party⁸ 'gainst the duke of Albany ?⁹
Advise yourself.²

Edg. I am sure on't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming,—Pardon me :—
In cunning, I must draw my sword upon you :—
Draw :—Seem to defend yourself : Now quit you well.
Yield :—

⁶ *Ear-kissing arguments* means that they are yet in reality only *whisper'd ones*. STEEVENS.

⁷ Something of a *suspicious, questionable, and uncertain nature*. This is, I think the meaning. JOHNSON.

Queazy, I believe, rather means *delicate, unsettled*, what requires to be handled nicely. STEEVENS.

Queazy is still used in Devonshire, to express that sickness of stomach which the slightest disgust is apt to provoke. HENLEY.

⁸ i. e. on his own behalf. HENLEY.

⁹ The meaning is, *have you said nothing upon the party formed by him against the duke of Albany ?* HANMER.

I cannot but think the line corrupted, and would read :

Against his party, for the duke of Albany ? JOHNSON.

² *Advise yourself.*] i. e. consider, recollect yourself. So, in *Twelfth Night* : "*Advise you what you say.*" STEEVENS.

Yield:—come before my father;—Light, ho, here?—
Fly, brother;—Torches! torches!—So, farewell,—

[Exit EDGAR.]

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion.

[wounds his arm.]

Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen drunkards
Do more than this in sport.—Father! father!
Stop, stop! No help?

Enter GLOSTER, and Servants with torches.

Glo. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,
Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon²
To stand his auspicious mistress:—

Glo. But where is he?

Edm. Look, sir, I bleed.

Glo. Where is the villain, Edmund?

Edm. Fled this way, sir. When by no means he could—

Glo. Pursue him, ho!—Go after.—[Exit Ser.] By no
means,—what?

Edm. Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;
But that I told him, the revenging gods
'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;
Spoke with how manifold and strong a bond
The child was bound to the father;—Sir, in fine,
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion,
With his prepared sword, he charges home
My unprovided body, lanc'd mine arm:
But when he saw my best alarm'd spirits,
Bold in the quarrel's right, rous'd to the encounter,
Or whether gasted³ by the noise I made,
Full suddenly he fled.

Glo. Let him fly far:

Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;

And

² This was a proper circumstance to urge to Gloster; who appears, by what passed between him and his bastard son in a foregoing scene, to be very superstitious with regard to this matter. WARBURTON.

³ Frighted. JOHNSON.

And found—Despatch.—The noble duke⁴ my master,
My worthy arch⁵ and patron, comes to-night :
By his authority I will proclaim it,
That he, which finds him, shall deserve our thanks,
Bringing the murderous coward to the stake ;
He, that conceals him, death.

Edm. When I dissuaded him from his intent,
And found him pight to do it, with curst speech⁶
I threaten'd to discover him : He replied,
*Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think,
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal⁷
Of any trust, virtue, or worth, in thee
Make thy words faith'd? No: what I should deny,
(As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce
My very character,⁸) I'd turn it all
To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice :
And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potential spurs
To make thee seek it.*

Gl. Strong and fasten'd villain!
Would he deny his letter?—I never got him.

[*Trumpets within.*]

Hark, the duke's trumpets! I know not why he comes :—
All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not 'scape;
The duke must grant me that: besides, his picture
I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
May have due note of him; and of my land,
Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
To make thee capable.⁹

Enter

⁴ The sense is interrupted. He shall be caught—and found, *be shall be punish'd.* Despatch. JOHNSON.

⁵ Chief; a word now used only in composition, as *arch-angel*, *arch-duke.* STEEVENS.

⁶ Pight is pitched, fixed, settled. Curst is severe, harsh, vehemently angry. JOHNSON.

⁷ Would any opinion that men have reposed in thy trust, virtue, &c. WARBURTON.

⁸ i. e. my very handwriting. MALONE.

⁹ i. e. capable of succeeding to my land, notwithstanding the legal bar of thy illegitimacy. STEEVENS.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, and Attendants.

Corn. How now, my noble friend? since I came hither,
(Which I can call but now,) I have heard strange news.

Reg. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short,
Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my lord?

Glo. O, madam, my old heart is crack'd, is crack'd!

Reg. What, did my father's godson seek your life?
He whom my father nam'd? your Edgar?

Glo. O, lady, lady, shame would have it hid!

Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous knights
That tend upon my father?

Glo. I know not, madam:
It is too bad, too bad.—

Edm. Yes, madam, he was.

Reg. No marvel then, though he were ill affected;
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have the waste and spoil of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well inform'd of them; and with such cautions,
That, if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.

Corn. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.—
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A child-like office.

Edm. 'Twas my duty, sir.

Glo. He did bewray his practice;² and receiv'd
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

Corn. Is he pursued?

Glo. Ay, my good lord, he is.

Corn. If he be taken, he shall never more
Be fear'd of doing harm: make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please.—For you, Edmund,
Whose virtue and obedience doth³ this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours;
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;
You we first seize on.

Edm.

² i. e. Discover, betray.

Practice is always used by Shakspeare for *insidious mischief*. STEEVENS.

³ i. e. whose virtuous obedience. MALONE.

Edm. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

Glo. For him I thank your grace.

Corn. You know not why we came to visit you,—

Reg. Thus out of season; threading dark-ey'd night.
Occasions, noble Gloster, of some poize,⁴
Wherein we must have use of your advice:—
Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
Of differences, which I best thought it fit
To answer from our home; ⁵ the several messengers
From hence attend despatch. Our good old friend,
Lay comforts to your bosom; and bestow
Your needful counsel to our business,
Which craves the instant use.

Glo. I serve you, madam:
Your graces are right welcome. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

Before Gloster's Castle.

Enter KENT and Steward, severally.

Stew. Good dawning to thee, friend: ⁶ Art of the house?

Kent. Ay.

Stew. Where may we set our horses?

Kent. I' the mire.

Stew. Pr'ythee, if thou love me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Stew. Why, then I care not for thee.

Kent.

⁴ i. e. of some weight or moment. MALONE.

⁵ Not at home, but at some other place. JOHNSON.

⁶ Thus the folio. The quartos—Good even. STEEVENS.

We should read with the folio—"Good dawning to thee friend" The latter end of this scene shows that it passed in the morning; for when Kent is placed in the stocks, Cornwall says, "There he shall sit 'till noon;" and Regan replies, "'Till noon, 'till night:" and it passed very early in the morning; for Regan tells Gloster, in the preceding page, that she had been *threading dark-ey'd night* to come to him.

M. MASON.

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold,⁷ I would make thee care for me.

Stew. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Stew. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave; a rascal, an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound,⁸ filthy worsted stocking knave; a lily-liver'd, action-taking knave;⁹ a whorson, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that would't be a bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deny't the least syllable of thy addition.²

Stew.

⁷ The allusion which seems to be contained in this line I do not understand. In the violent eruption of reproaches which bursts from Kent in this dialogue, there are some epithets which the commentators have left unexpounded, and which I am not very able to make clear. Of a *three-suited knave* I know not the meaning, unless it be that he has different dresses for different occupations. *Lily-liver'd* is cowardly; *white blooded* and *white-liver'd* are still in vulgar use. An *one-trunk-inheriting slave*, I take to be a wearer of old cast-off clothes, an inheritor of torn breeches.

JOHNSON.

I do not find the name of *Lipsbury*: it may be a cant phrase, with some corruption, taken from a place where the fines were arbitrary. *Three-suited* should, I believe, be *third-suited*, wearing clothes at the *third hand*. Edgar, in his pride, had *three suits* only. FARMER.

Lipsbury pinfold may be a cant expression importing the same as *Lob's Pound*.

Three-suited knave might mean, in an age of ostentatious finery like that of Shakspeare, one who had no greater change of raiment than *three suits* would furnish him with. STEEVENS.

⁸ A *hundred-pound gentleman* is a term of reproach used in Middleton's *Phœnix*, 1607. STEEVENS.

⁹ i. e. a fellow, who, if you beat him, would bring an action for the assault, instead of resenting it like a man of courage. M. MASON.

² i. e. titles. The Statute 1 Hen. V. ch. 5. which directs that in certain writs a description should be *added* to the name of the defendant, expressive of his estate, mystery, degree, &c. is called the statute of *Additions*. MALONE.

Kent is not only boisterous in his manners, but abusive in his language. His excessive ribaldry proceeds from an over solicitude to prevent being discovered: like St. Peter's swearing from a similar motive. HENLEY.

Stew. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one, that is neither known of thee, nor knows thee?

Kent. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou know'st me? Is it two days ago, since I tripp'd up thy heels, and beat thee, before the king? Draw, you rogue: for, though it be night, the moon shines; I'll make a sop o' the moonshine of you:³ Draw, you whorson cullionly barber-monger,⁴ draw. [*drawing his sword.*]

Stew. Away; I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king; and take vanity the puppet's part,⁵ against the royalty of her father: Draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your thanks:—draw, you rascal; come your ways.

Stew. Help, ho! murder! help!

Kent. Strike, you slave; stand, rogue, stand; you neat slave,⁶ strike. [*beating him.*]

Stew.

³ This is equivalent to our modern phrase of making *the sun shine through any one*. But, alluding to the natural philosophy of that time, it is obscure. The Peripatetics thought, though falsely, that the rays of the moon were cold and moist. The speaker therefore says, he would make a sop of his antagonist, which should absorb the humidity of the moon's rays, by letting them into his guts. WARBURTON.

I much question if our author had so deep a meaning as is here imputed to him by his more erudite commentator. STEEVENS.

Perhaps here an equivoque was intended. In *The Old Shepherd's Kalendar*, among the dishes recommended for *Prymetyne*, “One is egges in mone shine.” FARMER.

I suppose he means, that after having beaten the Steward sufficiently, and made his flesh as soft as moistened bread, he will lay him flat on the ground, like a sop in a pan, or a tankard. MALONE.

⁴ Of this word I do not clearly see the force. JOHNSON.

Barber-monger may mean, *dealer in the lower tradesmen*: a slur upon the steward, as taking fees for a recommendation to the business of the family. FARMER.

A *barber-monger*; i. e. a sop, who deals much with barbers, to adjust his hair and beard. M. MASON.

Barber-monger perhaps means one who consorts much with barbers.

MALONE.

⁵ Alluding to the mysteries or allegorical shows, in which vanity, iniquity, and other vices, were personified. JOHNSON.

The description is applicable only to the old *moralities*, between which and the *mysteries* there was an essential difference. RITSON.

⁶ You mere slave, you very slave. JOHNSON.

You

Stew. Help ho ! murder ! murder !

Enter EDMUND, CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER, and Servants.

Edm. How now ? What's the matter ? Part.

Kent. With you, goodman boy, if you please ; come, I'll flesh you ; come on, young master.

Glo. Weapons ! arms ! What's the matter here ?

Corn. Keep peace, upon your lives ;
He dies, that strikes again : What is the matter ?

Reg. The messengers from our sister and the king.

Corn. What is your difference ? speak.

Stew. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirr'd your valour. You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee ; a tailor made thee.

Corn. Thou art a strange fellow : a tailor make a man ?

Kent. Ay, a tailor, sir : a stone-cutter, or a painter, could not have made him so ill, though they had been but two hours at the trade.

Corn. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel ?

Stew. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spar'd,
At suit of his grey beard,—

Kent. Thou whorson zed ! thou unnecessary letter ?⁷—
My lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread this unbolted villain⁸ into a mortar,⁹ and daub the wall of a jakes with him.—Spare my grey beard, you wagtail ?

Corn.

You neat slave, I believe, means no more than *you finical rascal*, you who are an assemblage of *foppery and poverty*. STEEVENS.

⁷ Zed is here probably used as a term of contempt, because it is the last letter in the English alphabet, and as its place may be supplied by S, and the Roman alphabet has it not ; neither is it read in any word originally Teutonic. In Barret's *Alvarie, or Quadruple Dictionary*, 1580, it is quite omitted, as the author affirms it to be rather a syllable than a letter. C (as Dr. Johnson supposed) cannot be the unnecessary letter, as there are many words in which its place will not be supplied by any other, as *charity, chastity, &c.* STEEVENS.

This is taken from the grammarians of the time. Mulcaster says, “ Z is much harder amongst us, and seldom seen :—S is become its lieutenant general. It is lightlie expressed in English, saving in foren enfranchisements.” FARMER.

⁸ i. e. unrefined by education, the bran yet in him. Metaphor from the bakehouse. WARBURTON.

Corn. Peace, firrah!

You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

Kent. Yes, fir; but anger has a privilege.

Corn. Why art thou angry?

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords in twain
Which are too intrinse t'unloose: ² smooth every passion.
That in the natures of their lords rebels;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters, ³
As knowing nought, like dogs, but following.—
A plague upon your epileptick visage! ⁴
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?
Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,
I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot. ⁵

Corn. What, art thou mad, old fellow?

Glo. How fell you out?

Say that.

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy,
Than I and such a knave.

Corn. Why dost thou call him knave? What's his offence?

Kent.

⁹ This expression was much in use in our author's time.

STEEVENS.

Unbolted mortar is mortar made of unsifted lime, and therefore to break the lumps it is necessary to tread it by men in wooden shoes. This *unbolted* villain is therefore this *coarse* rascal. TOLLET.

² By these *holy cords* the poet means the natural union between parents, and children. The metaphor is taken from the *cords of the sanctuary*; and the fomenters of family differences are compared to these sacrilegious rats. The expression is fine and noble. WARBURTON.

³ The *halcyon* is the bird otherwise called the *king-fisher*. The vulgar opinion was, that this bird, if hung up, would *vary* with the wind, and by that means show from what point it blew. STEEVENS.

⁴ The frightened countenance of a man ready to fall in a fit. JOHNSON.

⁵ The place where the romances say king Arthur kept his court in the West; so this alludes to some proverbial speech in those romances.

WARBURTON.

In Somersetshire, near Camelot, are many large moors, where are bred great quantities of geese, so that many other places are from hence supplied with quills and feathers. HANMER.

Kent. His countenance likes me not.⁶

Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, or his, or hers.

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain;
I have seen better faces in my time,
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

Corn. This is some fellow,
Who, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness; and constrains the garb,
Quite from his nature:⁷ He cannot flatter, he!—
An honest mind and plain,—he must speak truth:
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbour more craft, and more corrupter ends,
Than twenty silly ducking observants,⁸
That stretch their duties nicely.

Kent. Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,
Under the allowance of your grand aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
On flickering Phœbus' front,⁹—

Corn. What mean'st by this?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no flatterer: he that beguiled you, in a plain accent, was a plain knave; which, for my part,

⁶ i. e. pleases me not. STEEVENS.

⁷ Forces his *outside* or his *appearance* to something totally different from his natural disposition. JOHNSON.

⁸ Silly means *simple*, or *rustick*.

“There was a fourth man in a *silly* habit,” meaning Posthumus in the dress of a peasant. *Nicely* is with *punctilious* folly. Niais. Fr.

STEEVENS.

Nicely is, I think, with the utmost exactness, with an attention to the most minute *trifle*. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“The letter was not *nice*, but full of charge. MALONE.

⁹ Dr. Johnson in his *Dictionary* says this word means to *flutter*.

STEEVENS.

Dr. Johnson's interpretation is too vague for the purpose. To *flicker* is indeed to *flutter*; but in a particular manner, which may be better exemplified by the motion of a *flame*, than explained by any verbal description. HENLEY.

part, I will not be, though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to it.²

Corn. What was the offence you gave him?

Stew.

Never any :

It pleas'd the king his master, very late,
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction ;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind ; being down, insulted, rail'd,
And put upon him such a deal of man,
That worthy'd him, got praises of the king
For him attempting who was self-subdu'd ;
And, in the fleshment² of this dread exploit,
Drew on me here.

Kent. None of these rogues, and cowards,
But Ajax is their fool.³

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks, ho !
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We'll teach you —

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn :
Call not your stocks for me : I serve the king ;
On whose employment I was sent to you :
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice

Against

¹ Though I should win you, displeased as you now are, to like me so well as to intreat me to be a knave. JOHNSON.

² A young soldier is said to flesh his sword, the first time he draws blood with it. *Fleshment*, therefore, is here metaphorically applied to the first act of service which Kent, in his new capacity, had performed for his master ; and, at the same time, in a sarcastick sense, as though he had esteemed it an heroick exploit to trip a man behind, that was actually falling. HENLEY.

³ Meaning, as we should now express it. Ajax is a fool to them, there are none of these knaves and cowards, that if you believe themselves, are not so brave, that Ajax is a fool compared to them ; alluding to the steward's account of their quarrel, where he says of Kent, " This ancient ruffian, whose life I have spared in pity to his gray beard." When a man is compared to one who excels him very much in any art or quality — it is a vulgar expression to say, " He is but a fool to him."

M. MASON :

The foregoing explanation of this passage was suggested also by Mr. Malone, in his *Second Appendix* to the *Supp. to Shakspeare*, 8vo. 1783, in opposition to an idea of mine, which I readily allow to have been erroneous. STEEVENS.

Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks :—
As I've life and honour, there shall he sit till noon.

Reg. Till noon ! till night, my lord ; and all night too.

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,
You should not use me so.

Reg. Sir, being his knave, I will.

[*Stocks brought out.*³

Corn. This is a fellow of the self-same colour
Our sister speaks of :—Come, bring away the stocks.

Glo. Let me beseech your grace not to do so :
His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will check him for't : your purpos'd low correction
Is such, as basest and contemn'd 'st wretches,
For pilferings and most common trespasses,
Are punish'd with : the king must take it ill,
That he's so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

Corn. I'll answer that.

Reg. My sister may receive it much more worse,
To have her gentleman abus'd, assaulted,
For following her affairs.—Put in his legs.—

[*KENT is put in the stocks.*⁴

Come, my good lord ; away. [*Exeunt REG. and CORN.*

Glo. I am sorry for thee, friend ; 'tis the duke's pleasure,
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd, nor stopp'd ;⁵ I'll entreat for thee.

Kent. Pray, do not, sir : I have watch'd and travell'd
hard ;

Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.

A good man's fortune may grow out at heels :

Give you good morrow !

Glo.

³ This is not the first time that stocks had been introduced on the stage. In *Hick-scorner*, which was printed early in the reign of King Henry VIII. Pity is put into them, and left there till he is freed by *Perseverance* and *Contemplacyon*. STEEVENS.

⁴ It should be remembered, that formerly in great houses, as still in some colleges, there were moveable stocks for the correction of the servants. FARMER.

⁵ Metaphor from bowling. WARBURTON.

Glo. The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken.

[*Exit.*

Kent. Good king, that must approve the common saw!⁶
 Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st
 To the warm sun!
 Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
 That by thy comfortable beams I may
 Peruse this letter!—Nothing almost sees miracles,
 But misery:—I know, 'tis from Cordelia;⁷
 Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
 Of my obscured course; and shall find time
 From this enormous state,—seeking to give
 Losses their remedies:⁸—All weary and o'er-watch'd,
 Take

⁶ That art now to exemplify the common proverb, *That out of, &c.* That changeft better for worfe. Hanmer observes, that it is a proverbial faying, applied to thofe who are turned out of houfe and home to the open weather. It was perhaps firft ufed of men difmiffed from an hospital, or houfe of charity, fuch as was erected formerly in many places for travellers. Thofe houfes had names properly enough alluded to by *heaven's benediction*. JOHNSON.

Kent was not thinking of the king's being *turned out of houfe and home to the open weather*, a misery which he has not yet experienced, but of his being likely to receive a worfe reception from Regan than that which he had already experienced from his elder daughter Goneril. Hanmer therefore certainly mifunderftood the paffage. MALONE.

⁷ This paffage, which fome of the editors have degraded as fpurious, to the margin, and others have f silently altered, I have faithfully printed according to the quarto, from which the folio differs only in punctuation. The paffage is very obfcure, if not corrupt. Perhaps it may be read thus:
 —Cordelia—has been—informed
 Of my obfcured courfe, and fhall find time
 From this enormous ftate-seeking, to give
 Losses their remedies.—

Cordelia is informed of our affairs, and when the *enormous* care of *seeking her fortune* will allow her time, ſhe will employ it in remedying loſſes. This is harſh; perhaps ſomething better may be found. I have at leaſt ſupplied the genuine reading of the old copies. *Enormous* is unwonted, out of rule, out of the ordinary courſe of things. JOHNSON.

⁸ I confeſs I do not underſtand this paffage, unleſs it may be conſidered as *divided parts of Cordelia's letter*, which he is reading to himſelf by moonlight: it certainly conveys the ſenſe of what ſhe would have ſaid. In reading a letter, it is natural enough to dwell on thoſe circumſtances in it that promiſe the change in our affairs which we moſt wiſh for; and

Kent

Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.

Fortune,

Kent having read Cordelia's assurances that she will find a time to free the injured from the *enormous* misrule of Regan, is willing to go to sleep with that pleasing reflection uppermost in his mind. But this is mere conjecture. STEEVENS.

Dr. Johnson's explanation of this passage cannot be right; for although in the old ballad whence this play is supposed to be taken, Cordelia is forced to seek her fortune, in the play itself she is queen of France, and has no fortune to seek; but it is more difficult to discover the real meaning of this speech, than to refute his conjecture. It seems to me, that the verb, *shall find*, is not governed by the word Cordelia, but by the pronoun *I*, in the beginning of the sentence; and that the words *from this enormous state*, do not refer to Cordelia, but to Kent himself, dressed like a clown, and condemned to the stocks,—an enormous state indeed for a man of his high rank.

The difficulty of this passage has arisen from a mistake in all the former editors, who have printed these three lines, as if they were a quotation from Cordelia's letter, whereas they are in fact the words of Kent himself; let the reader consider them in that light, as part of Kent's own speech, the obscurity is at an end, and the meaning is clearly this:—
“I know that the letter is from Cordelia, (who hath been informed of my obscured course) and shall gain time, by this strange disguise and situation, which I shall employ in seeking to remedy our present losses.”

M. MASON.

Notwithstanding the ingenuity and confidence of Mr. M. Mason, (who has not however done justice to his own idea) I cannot but concur with Mr. Steevens, in ascribing these broken expressions to the letter of Cordelia.—For, if the words were Kent's, there will be no intimation from the letter that can give the least insight to Cordelia's design; and the only apparent purport of it will be, to tell Kent that she knew his situation. But exclusive of this consideration, what hopes could Kent entertain, in a condition so deplorable as his—unless Cordelia should take an opportunity, from the anarchy of the kingdom, and the broils subsisting between Albany and Cornwall—of *finding a time, to give losses their remedies*?—Curan had before mentioned to Edmund, the rumour of *Wars toward*, between these dukes. This report had reached Cordelia, who, having also discovered the situation and fidelity of Kent, writes to inform him, that she should avail herself of the first opportunity which the enormities of the times might offer, of restoring him to her father's favour, and her father to his kingdom. [See Act III. sc. i. Act IV. sc. iii.]

HENLEY.

In the old copies these words are printed in the same character as the rest of the speech. I have adhered to them, not conceiving that they form any part of Cordelia's letter, or that any part of it is or can be read by Kent. He wishes for the rising of the sun, that he *may* read it. I suspect

Fortune, good night ; smile once more ; turn thy wheel !
[*He sleeps.*]

S C E N E III.

A Part of the Heath.

Enter EDGAR.

Edg. I heard myself proclaim'd ;
And, by the happy hollow of a tree,
Escap'd the hunt. No port is free ; no place,
That guard, and most unusual vigilance,
Does not attend my taking. While I may scape,
I will preserve myself : and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape,
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast : my face I'll grime with filth ;
Blanket my loins ; elf all my hair in knots ;⁹
And with presented nakedness out-face
The winds, and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars,² who, with roaring voices,

Strike

suspect that two half lines have been lost between the words *state* and *seeking*. This *enormous state* means, I think, the confusion subsisting in the state, in consequence of the discord which had arisen between the dukes of Albany and Cornwall ; of which Kent hopes Cordelia will avail herself. MALONE.

My reason for concurring with former editors in a supposition that the *moon*, not the *sun*, was meant by the *beacon*, arose from a consideration that the term, *beacon*, was more applicable to the *moon*, being, like that planet, only designed for night-service. STEEVENS.

⁹ Hair thus knotted, was vulgarly supposed to be the work of *elves* and fairies in the night. STEEVENS.

² In *The Bell-man of London*, by Decker, 5th edit. 1640, is the following account of one of these characters, under the title of an *Abraham-Man*. “ — he sweares he hath been in Bedlam, and will talke frantickely of purpose : you see *pinnes* stuck in sundry places of his naked flesh, especially in his *armes*, which paine he gladly puts himselfe to, only to make you believe he is out of his wits. He calles himselfe by the name of *Poore Tom*, and comming near any body cries out, *Poor Tom is a-cold*. Of these *Abraham-men*, some be exceeding merry, and doe nothing but sing songs fashioned out of their owne braines : some will dance, others will

Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
 Pins, wooden pricks,³ nails, sprigs of rosemary;
 And with this horrible object, from low farms,
 Poor pelting villages,⁴ sheep-cotes, and mills,
 Sometime with lunatick bans,⁵ sometime with prayers,
 Enforce their charity.—Poor Turlygood! poor Tom!⁶
 That's something yet;—Edgar I nothing am.⁷ [Exit.]

will doe nothing but either laugh or weepe: others are dogged, and so fullen both in loke and speech, that spying but a small company in a house, they boldly and bluntly enter, *compelling* the servants through feare to give them what they demand."

To *sham Abraham*, a cant term, still in use among sailors and the vulgar, may have this origin. STEEVENS.

³ i. e. skewers. STEEVENS.

Steevens is right: the *euonymus*, of which the best skewers are made, is called *prick-wood*. M. MASON.

⁴ *Pelting* is used by Shakspeare in the sense of beggarly: I suppose from *pelt* a skin. The poor being generally cloathed in leather.

WARBURTON.

Pelting is, I believe, only an accidental depravation of *petty*.

JOHNSON.

⁵ To *ban*, is to curse.

⁶ We should read *Turlupin*. In the fourteenth century there was a new species of gipsies, called *Turlupins*, a *fraternity of naked beggars*, which ran up and down Europe. However, the church of Rome hath dignified them with the name of *heretics*, and actually burned some of them at Paris. But what sort of religionists they were, appears from Genebrard's account of them. "Turlupin Cynicorum sectam suscitantes, de nuditate pudendorum, & publico coitu." Plainly, nothing but a band of *Tom-^o-Bedlams*. WARBURTON.

Hanmer reads—*poor Turluru*. It is probable the word *Turlygood* was the common corrupt pronunciation. JOHNSON.

⁷ As Edgar I am outlawed, dead in law; I have no longer any political existence. JOHNSON.

The critick's idea is both too complex and too puerile for one in Edgar's situation. He is pursued, it seems, and proclaimed, i. e. a reward has been offered for taking or killing him. In assuming this character, says he, I may preserve myself; as Edgar I am inevitably gone.

RITSON.

Perhaps the meaning is, As poor Tom, I may exist: appearing as Edgar, I am lost. MALONE.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

*Before Gloster's Castle.*⁸*Enter LEAR, Fool, and Gentleman.*

Lear. 'Tis strange, that they should so depart from home,
And not send back my messenger.

Gent. As I learn'd,
The night before there was no purpose in them
Of this remove.

Kent. Hail to thee, noble master!

Lear. How!
Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

Kent. No, my lord.

Fool. Ha, ha; look! he wears cruel garters!⁹ Horses are
tied by the heads; dogs, and bears, by the neck; monkies by
the

⁸ It is not very clearly discovered why Lear comes hither. In the foregoing part he sent a letter to Gloster; but no hint is given of its contents. He seems to have gone to visit Gloster while Cornwall and Regan might prepare to entertain him. JOHNSON.

It is plain, I think, that Lear comes to the earl of Gloucester's in consequence of his having been at the duke of Cornwall's and having heard there, that his son and daughter were gone to the earl of Gloucester's. His first words show this: "'Tis strange that they (Cornwall and Regan) should so depart from home, and not send back my messenger (Kent)." It is clear also from Kent's speech in this scene, that he went directly from Lear to the duke of Cornwall's, and delivered his letters, but, instead of being sent back with any answer, was ordered to follow the duke and duchess to the earl of Gloucester's. But what then is the meaning of Lear's order to Kent in the preceding act, scene v. *Go you before to Gloucester with these letters.*—The obvious meaning, and what will agree best with the course of the subsequent events, is, that the duke of Cornwall and his wife were then residing at Gloucester. Why Shakspeare should choose to suppose them at Gloucester, rather than at any other city, is a different question. Perhaps he might think, that Gloster implied such a neighbourhood to the earl of Gloucester's castle, as his story required. TYRWHITT.

⁹ I believe a quibble was here intended. *Crewel* signifies *worsted*, of which stockings, garters, night-caps, &c. are made. STEEVENS.

the loins, and men by the legs : when a man is over-lusty ² at legs, then he wears wooden nether-stocks.³

Lear. What's he, that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here ?

Kent. It is both he and she,
Your son and daughter.

Lear. No.

Kent. Yes

Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say, yea.

Lear. No, no ; they would not.

Kent. Yes, they have.

Lear. By Jupiter, I swear no.

Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.

Lear. They durst not do't ;

They could not, would not do't ; 'tis worse than murder,
To do upon respect such violent outrage : ⁴
Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way
Thou might'st deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.

Kent. My lord, when at their home
I did commend your highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that shew'd
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress, salutations ;
Delivered letters, spite of intermission, ⁵

Which

² *Over-lusty* in this place has a double signification. *Lustiness* anciently meant *sauciness*. STEEVENS.

³ *Nether-stocks* is the old word for *stockings*. *Breeches* were at that time called "men's *overstockes*."

The stockings were formerly sewed to the breeches. STEEVENS.

⁴ To violate the publick and venerable character of a messenger from the king. JOHNSON.

To do an outrage upon *respect*, does not, I believe, *primarily* mean, to behave outrageously to *persons* of a respectable character, (though that in substance is the sense of the words,) but rather, to be *grossly deficient in respect* to those who are entitled to it, considering *respect* as personified.

MALONE.

⁵ *Intermission*, for another message, which they had then before them,
to

Which presently they read : on whose contents,
 They summon'd up their meiny,⁶ straight took horse ;
 Commanded me to follow, and attend
 The leisure of their answer ; gave me cold looks :
 And meeting here the other messenger,
 Whose welcome, I perceiv'd, had poison'd mine,
 (Being the very fellow that of late
 Display'd so saucily against your highness,)
 Having more man than wit about me, drew ;
 He rais'd the house with loud and coward cries :
 Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
 The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet,⁷ if the wild geese fly that way.

Fathers, that wear rags,

Do make their children blind ;

But fathers, that bear bags,

Shall see their children kind.

Fortune, that arrant whore,

Ne'er turns the key to the poor.—

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours⁸ for thy
 daughters,⁹ as thou can'st tell in a year.

Lear.

to consider of ; called *intermission*, because it came between their leisure
 and the steward's message. WARBURTON.

Spite of intermission is without pause, without suffering time to intervene.

STEEVENS.

Spite of intermission, perhaps means in spite of, or without regarding,
 that message which *intervened*, and which was entitled to precedent
 attention.

Spite of intermission, however, may mean, in spite of being obliged to
 pause and take breath, after having *panted forth* the salutation from his
 mistress. MALONE.

⁶ *Meiny*, i. e. people. POPE.

Though the word *meiny* be now obsolete, the word *menial*, which is
 derived from it, is still in use. On *whose* contents, means the contents
 of which. M. MASON.

Menial is by some derived from servants being *intra moenia* or domesticks.
 An etymology favoured by the Roman termination of the word. *Many*,
 in Kent's sense, for *train* or *retinue* was used so late as Dryden's time.

HOLT WHITE.

⁷ If this be their behaviour, the king's troubles are not yet at an
 end. JOHNSON.

⁸ Quibble intended between *dolours* and *dollars*. HANMER.

⁹ i. e. on account of thy daughters' ingratitude. In the first part of
 the

Lear. O, how this mother² swells up toward my heart!
Hysterica passio! down, thou climbing sorrow,
 Thy element's below!—Where is this daughter?

Kent. With the earl, sir, here within.

Lear. Follow me not?
 Stay here. [Exit.]

Gent. Made you no more offence than what you speak of?

Kent. None.

How chance the king comes with so small a train?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that question,
 thou hadst well deserved it.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant,³ to teach thee
 there's

the sentence *dolours* is understood in its true sense; in the latter part it is taken for *dollars*. MALONE.

² *Lear* here affects to pass off the swelling of his heart ready to burst with grief and indignation, for the disease called the *Mother*, or *Hysterica Passio*, which, in our author's time, was not thought peculiar to women only. In Harfnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*, Richard Mainy, Gent. one of the pretended demoniacs, deposes, p. 236, that the first night that he came to Denham, the seat of Mr. Peckham, where these impostures were managed, he was somewhat evill at ease, and he grew worse and worse with an old disease that he had, and which the priests persuaded him was from the possession of the devil, viz. "The disease, I spake of was a spice of the *Mother*, wherewith I had bene troubled . . . before my going into Fraunce: whether I doe rightly term it the *Mother* or no, I knowe not . . . When I was sicke of this disease in Fraunce, a Scottish doctor of physick then in Paris, called it, as I remember, *Vertiginem Capitis*. It riseth . . . of a winde in the bottome of the belly, and proceeding with a great swelling, causeth a very painful collicke in the stomack, and an extraordinary giddines in the head."

It is at least very probable, that Shakspeare would not have thought of making *Lear* affect to have the *Hysterick Passion*, or *Mother*, if this passage in Harfnet's pamphlet had not suggested it to him, when he was selecting the other particulars from it, in order to furnish out his character of Tom of Bedlam, to whom this demoniacal gibberish is admirably adapted. PERCY.

In p. 25 of the above pamphlet it is said "Ma: Maynie had a spice of the *Hysterica passio*, as seems, from his youth, he himselfe terms it the *Mooother*." RITSON.

³ "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, (says Solomon,) learn her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, over-seer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest."

By this allusion more is meant than is expressed. If, says the Fool,

there's no labouring in the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes, but blind men ; and there's not a nose among twenty, but can smell him that's stinking. ⁴ Let go thy hold, when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it ; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee ⁵ better counsel, give me mine again : I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That, sir, which serves and seeks for gain,

And follows but for form,

Will pack, when it begins to rain,

And leave thee in the storm.

But I will tarry ; the fool will stay,

And let ⁶ the wise man fly :

The knave turns fool, that runs away ;

The fool no knave, perdy.

Kent.

you had been school'd by the ant, you would have known that the king's train, like that sagacious animal, prefer the summer of prosperity to the colder season of adversity, from which no profit can be derived ; and desert him, whose "mellow hangings" have been shaken down, and who by "one winter's brush" has been left "open and bare for every storm that blows." MALONE.

⁴ The word *twenty* refers to the *noses* of the *blind men*, and not to the men in general. STEEVENS.

Mr. M. Mason supposes we should read *sinking*. What the Fool, says he, wants to describe is, the sagacity of mankind, in finding out the man whose fortunes are declining. REED.

Stinking is the true reading. STEEVENS.

⁵ One cannot too much commend the caution which our moral poet uses, on all occasions, to prevent his sentiment from being perversely taken. So here, having given an ironical precept in commendation of perfidy and base desertion of the unfortunate, for fear it should be understood seriously, though delivered by his buffoon or jester, he has the precaution to add this beautiful corrective, full of fine sense ;—"I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it."

WARBURTON.

⁶ I think this passage erroneous, though both the copies concur. The sense will be mended if we read :

But I will tarry ; the fool will stay,

And let the wise man fly ;

The fool turns knave, that runs away ;

The knave no fool,—

That I stay with the king is a proof that I am a fool ; the wise men are deserting him. There is knavery in this desertion, but there is no folly. JOHNSON.

Kent. Where learn'd you this, fool?

Fool. Not i' the stocks, fool.

Re-enter LEAR, with GLOSTER.

Lear. Deny to speak with me? They are sick? they are weary?

They have travell'd hard to-night? Mere fetches;
The images of revolt and flying off!
Fetch me a better answer.

Glo. My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the duke;
How unremoveable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!—
Fiery? what quality? Why, Gloster, Gloster,
I'd speak with the duke of Cornwall, and his wife.

Glo. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

Lear. Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me, man?

Glo. Ay, my good lord.

Lear. The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear
father

Would with his daughter speak, commands her service:
Are they inform'd of this?—My breath and blood!—

Fiery? the fiery duke?—Tell the hot duke, that—

No, but not yet:—may be, he is not well:

Infirmity doth still neglect all office,

Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves,

When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind

To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;

And am fallen out with my more headier will,

To take the indispos'd and sickly fit

For the sound man.—Death on my state! wherefore

[*looking on KENT.*]

Should he sit here? This act persuades me,

That this remotion⁷ of the duke and her

Is practice only.⁸ Give me my servant forth:

Go, tell the duke and his wife, I'd speak with them,

Now,

⁷ From their own house to that of the earl of Gloster. MALONE.

⁸ *Practice* is in Shakspeare, and other old writers, used commonly in an ill sense for *unlawful artifice*. JOHNSON.

Now, presently : bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum,
Till it cry, *Sleep to death*.⁹

Glo. I'd have all well betwixt you. [Exit.

Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart !—but, down.

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney² did to the eels,
when she put them i' the paste³ alive ; she rapp'd 'em o' the
coxcombs with a stick, and cry'd, *Down, wanton's, down* :
'Twas her brother, that, in pure kindness to his horse, but-
ter'd his hay.

Enter

⁹ This, as it stands, appears to be a mere nonsensical rhapsody.—
Perhaps we should read—*Death to sleep* instead of *Sleep to death*.

M. MASON.

² It is not easy to determine the exact power of this term of contempt,
which, as the editor of the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer observes, might
have been originally borrowed from the kitchen. From the ancient bal-
lad of *The Turnament of Tottenham*, published by Dr. Percy in his second
volume of *Ancient Poetry*, p. 24, it should seem to signify a cook :

“ At that feast were they served in rich array ;

“ Every five and five had a *cokeney*.”

i. e. a cook, or scullion, to attend them.

Shakspeare, however, in *Twelfth Night*, makes his Clown say, “ I
am afraid this great lubber the world, will prove a *cockney*.” In this
place it seems to have a signification not unlike that which it bears at
present.

See the notes on the *Canterbury Tales of Chaucer*, Vol. IV. p. 253.
where the reader will meet with more information on this subject.

STEEVENS.

Cockenay, as Dr. Percy imagines, cannot be a cook or scullion, but is
some dish which I am unable to ascertain. My authority is the following
epigram from Davies :

“ He that comes every day, shall have a *cock-nay*,

“ And he that comes but now and then, shall have a fat hen.”

Ep. on Eng. Prov. 179.

WHALLEY.

Mr. Malone expresses his doubt whether *cockney* means a *scullion*, &c.
in *Turnament of Tottenham* ; and to the lines already quoted from J.
Davies's *Scourge of Folly*, adds the two next :

“ But cocks that to hens come but now and then,

“ Shall have a *cock-nay*, not the fat hen.”

I have been lately informed by an old lady that, during her childhood,
she remembers having eaten a kind of sugar pellets called at that time
cockneys. STEEVENS.

³ Hinting that the eel and Lear are in the same danger. JOHNSON.

This reference is not sufficiently explained.—The *paste*, or *crust* of a
pie, in Shakspeare's time, was called a *coffin*. HENLEY.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER, and Servants.

Lear. Good morrow to you both.

Corn.

Hail to your grace!

[KENT is set at liberty.]

Reg. I am glad to see your highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason I have to think so: if thou should'st not be glad, I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, Sepulch'ring an adultress.—O, are you free? [to KENT. Some other time for that.—Beloved Regan, Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here, 4—

[points to his heart.]

I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe, Of how depriv'd a quality —O Regan!

Reg. I pray you, sir, take patience; I have hope, You less know how to value her desert, Than she to scant her duty.⁵

Lear.

Say, how is that?

Reg. I cannot think, my sister in the least Would fail her obligation: If, sir, perchance, She have restrain'd the riots of your followers, 'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end, As clears her from all blame.

Lear. My curses on her!

Reg.

⁴ Alluding to the fable of Prometheus. WARBURTON.

⁵ The word *scant* is directly contrary to the sense intended. The quarto reads:

— — *slack* her duty,
which is no better. May we not change it thus:

You less know how to value her desert,
Than she to *scan* her duty.

To *scan* may be to *measure* or *proportion*. Yet our author uses his negatives with such licentiousness, that it is hardly safe to make any alteration. — *Scant* may mean to *adapt*, to *fit*, to *proportion*; which sense seems still to be retained in the mechanical term *scantling*. JOHNSON.

Sir Thomas Hanmer had proposed this change of *scant* into *scan*; but surely no alteration is necessary. The other reading — *slack*, would answer as well. You less know how to value her desert, than she (knows) to *scant* her duty, i. e. than she can be capable of being wanting in her duty. I have at least given the *intended* meaning of the passage.

STEEVENS.

Reg. O, fir, you are old ;
 Nature in you stands on the very verge
 Of her confine : you should be rul'd, and led
 By some discretion, that discerns your state
 Better than you yourself : Therefore, I pray you,
 'That to our sister you do make return ;
 Say, you have wrong'd her, fir.

Lear. Ask her forgiveness ?
 Do you but mark how this becomes the house : ⁶
Dear daughter, I confess that I am old ;
Age is unnecessary : ⁷ on my knees I beg, [kneeling.
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.

Reg. Good fir, no more ; these are unsightly tricks :
 Return you to my sister.

Lear. Never, Regan :
 She hath abated me of half my train ;
 Look'd black upon me ; ⁸ struck me with her tongue,
 Most serpent-like, upon the very heart :—
 All the stor'd vengeance of heaven fall
 On her ingrateful top ! Strike her young bones,
 You taking airs, with lameness !

Corn. Fie, fie, fie !

Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames
 Into her scornful eyes ! Infect her beauty,
 You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
 To fall and blast her pride ! ⁹

Reg.

⁶ The order of families, duties of relation. WARBURTON.

⁷ i. e. Old age has few wants. JOHNSON.

This usage of the word *unnecessary* is quite without example ; and I believe my learned coadjutor has rather improved than explained the meaning of his author, who seems to have designed to say no more than that it seems *unnecessary* to children that the lives of their parents *should be prolonged*. *Age is unnecessary*, may mean, *old people are useless*.

STEEVENS.

Unnecessary in Lear's speech, I believe, means—in want of necessities, unable to procure them. TYRWHITT.

⁸ To look black, may easily be explain'd to look cloudy or gloomy.

JOHNSON.

⁹ *Fall* is, I think, used here as an active verb, signifying to humble or pull down. MALONE.

I see no occasion for supposing with Malone, that the word *fall* is to be

Reg. O the blest gods!
So will you wish on me, when the rash mood's on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse;
Thy tender-hefted nature² shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness; her eyes are fierce, but thine
Do comfort, and not burn: 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,³
And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
Against my coming in: thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude;
Thy half o' the kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

Reg. Good sir, to the purpose.

[*Trumpets within.*]

Lear. Who put my man i' the stocks?

Corn. What trumpet's that?

Enter STEWARD.

Reg. I know't, my sister's:⁴ this approves her letter,
That

be considered in an active sense, as signifying to *humble* or *pull down*; it appears to me to be used in this passage in its common acceptation; and that the plain meaning is this, "You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn up by the sun in order to fall down again and blast her pride. M. MASON.

I once proposed the same explanation to Dr. Johnson, but he would not receive it. STEEVENS.

² *Hefted* seems to mean the same as *heaved*. *Tender hefted*, i. e. whose bosom is agitated by tender passions. The formation of such a participle, I believe, cannot be grammatically accounted for. Shakspeare uses *hefts* for *heavings* in *The Winter's Tale*, Act II. *Hest* is an old word signifying *command*. STEEVENS.

³ To contract my allowances or proportions settled. JOHNSON.

A *sizer* is one of the lowest rank of students at Cambridge, and lives on a stated allowance.

Sizes are certain portions of bread, beer, or other victuals, which in publick societies are set down to the account of particular persons: a word still used in colleges.

Size sometimes means *company*; and I suppose a *barbal size* is a *bearded company*. STEEVENS.

⁴ Thus, in *Othello*:

"The Moor,—I know his trumpet."

It should seem from both these passages, and others that might be
4 quoted,

That she would soon be here.—Is your lady come?

Lear. This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows:—

Out, varlet, from my sight!

Corn. What means your grace?

Lear. Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have good
hope

Thou didst not know of't.—Who comes here? O heavens,

Enter GONERIL.

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway

Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,⁵

Make it your cause; send down, and take my part!—

Art not ashamed to look upon this beard?— [to GON.]

O, Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

Gon. Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?

All's not offence, that indiscretion finds,⁶

And dotage terms so.

Lear. O, fides, you are too tough!

Will you yet hold?—How came my man i' the stocks?

Corn. I set him there, sir: but his own disorders

Deserv'd much less advancement.⁷

Lear.

quoted, that the approach of great personages was announced by some distinguishing note or tune appropriately used by their own trumpeters. Cornwall knows not the present sound; but to Regan, who had often heard her sister's trumpet, the first flourish of it was as familiar as was that of the Moor to the ears of Iago. STEEVENS.

⁵ Mr. Upton has proved by irresistible authority, that to *allow* signifies not only to *permit*, but to *approve*, and has deservedly replaced the old reading, which Dr. Warburton had changed into *hallow obedience*, not recollecting the scripture expression, *The Lord alloweth the righteous*, Psalm, xi. ver. 6. Dr. Warburton might have found the emendation which he proposed, in Tate's alteration of *King Lear*, which was first published in 1687. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Finds* is here used in the same sense as when a jury is said to *find* a bill, to which it is an allusion. EDWARDS.

To *find* is little more than to *think*. The French use their word *trouver* in the same sense; and we still say I *find* time tedious, or I *find* company troublesome, without thinking on a jury. STEEVENS.

⁷ The word *advancement* is ironically used for *conspicuousness* of punishment; as we now say, *a man is advanced to the pillory*. We should read: — but

Lear. You! did you?

Reg. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.⁸
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me;
I am now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage⁹ against the enmity o' the air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,—
Necessity's sharp pinch! —Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life² afoot:—Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter³
To this detested groom. [Looking on the Steward.]

Gon. At your choice, sir.

Lear. I pr'ythee, daughter, do not make me mad;
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:—
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or, rather, a disease that's in my flesh,

Which

— but his own disorders

Deserv'd much *more* advancement. JOHNSON.

By *less advancement* is meant, a still worse or more disgraceful situation;
a situation not so reputable. PERCY.

Cornwall certainly means, that Kent's *disorders* had entitled him even
to a post of less honour than the stocks. STEEVENS.

⁸ The meaning is, since *you are weak* be content to think yourself
weak. JOHNSON.

⁹ To *wage* is often used absolutely without the word *war* after it, and
yet signifies *to make war*, as before in this play:

My life I never held but as a pawn
To *wage* against thine enemies.

The words—*necessity's sharp pinch!* appear to be the reflection of Lear
on the wretched sort of existence he had described in the preceding lines.

STEEVENS.

² i. e. In a *servile* state. JOHNSON.

³ *Sumpter* is a horse that carries necessaries on a journey, though some-
times used for the case to carry them in. STEEVENS.

Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
 A plague-fore, an embossed carbuncle,⁴
 In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
 Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:
 I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
 Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:
 Mend, when thou canst; be better, at thy leisure:
 I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
 I, and my hundred knights.

Reg. Not altogether so, sir;
 I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
 For your fit welcome: Give ear, sir, to my sister;
 For those that mingle reason with your passion,
 Must be content to think you old, and so—
 But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoke now?

Reg. I dare avouch it, sir: What, fifty followers?
 Is it not well? What should you need of more?
 Yea, or so many? fith that both charge and danger
 Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,
 Should many people, under two commands,
 Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
 From those that she calls servants, or from mine?

Reg. Why not, my lord? If then they chanc'd to slack
 you,
 We could control them: If you will come to me,
 (For now I spy a danger,) I entreat you
 To bring but five and twenty; to no more
 Will I give place, or notice.

Lear. I gave you all—

Reg. And in good time you gave it.

Lear. Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
 But kept a reservation to be follow'd
 With such a number: What, must I come to you
 With five and twenty, Regan? said you so?

Reg. And speak it again, my lord; no more with me.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd,
 When

⁴ *Embossed*, is swelling, protuberant. JOHNSON.

When others are more wicked ; not being the worst,
Stands in some rank of praise :—I'll go with thee ;

[To GONERIL.

Thy fifty yet doth double five and twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

Gon.

Hear me, my lord ;

What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house, where twice so many
Have a command to tend you ?

Reg.

What need one ?

Lear. O, reason not the need : our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous :

Allow not nature more than nature needs

Man's life is cheap as beast's : thou art a lady ;

If only to go warm were gorgeous,

Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,

Which scarcely keeps thee warm.—But, for true need,—

You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need !

You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,

As full of grief as age ; wretched in both !

If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts

Against their father, fool me not so much

To bear it tamely ; touch me with noble anger !

O, let not women's weapons, water-drops,

Stain my man's cheeks !—No, you unnatural hags,

I will have such revenges on you both,

That all the world shall—I will do such things,—

What they are, yet I know not ; but they shall be

The terrors of the earth. You think, I'll weep ;

No, I'll not weep :—

I have full cause of weeping ; but this heart

Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws.⁵

Or ere I'll weep :—O, fool, I shall go mad !

[*Exeunt* LEAR, GLOSTER, KENT, and Fool.

Corn. Let us withdraw, 'twill be a storm.

[*Storm heard at a distance.*

Reg.

This house

Is

⁵ A *flaw* signifying a crack or other similar imperfection, our author, with his accustomed license, uses the word here for a *small broken particle*.

Is little; the old man and his people cannot
Be well bestow'd.

Gon. 'Tis his own blame; he hath put
Himself from rest, and must needs taste his folly.

Reg. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

Gon. So am I purpos'd.
Where is my lord of Gloster?

Re-enter GLOSTER.

Corn. Follow'd the old man forth:—he is return'd.

Glo. The king is in high rage.

Corn. Whither is he going?

Glo. He calls to horse; but will I know not whither.

Corn. 'Tis best to give him way; he leads himself.

Gon. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

Glo. Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak winds
Do sorely ruffle;⁶ for many miles about
There's scarce a bush.

Reg. O, fir, to wilful men,
The injuries, that they themselves procure,
Must be their schoolmasters: Shut up your doors;
He is attended with a desperate train;
And what they may incense him to,⁷ being apt
To have his ear abus'd, wisdom bids fear.

Corn. Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night;
My Regan counsels well: come out o' the storm. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

A Heath.

*A storm is heard, with thunder and lightning. Enter KENT,
and a Gentleman, meeting.*

Kent. Who's here, beside foul weather?

Gent. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

Kent.

⁶ A ruffler, in our author's time, was a noisy, boisterous, swaggerer.

MALONE.

⁷ To incense is here, as in other places, to instigate. MALONE.

Kent. I know you ; Where's the king ?

Gent. Contending with the fretful element : ⁸

Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,⁹
That things might change, or cease : tears his white hair ;
Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of ;
Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
This night, wherein the cub-drawn² bear would couch,
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all.

Kent. But who is with him ?

Gent. None but the fool ; who labours to out-jest
His heart-struck injuries.

Kent. Sir, I do know you ;
And dare, upon the warrant of my art,
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,
Although as yet the face of it be cover'd
With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall ;
Who have (as who have not, that their great stars
Thron'd and set high ?) servants, who seem no less ;
Which are to France the spies and speculations
Intelligent of our state ; what hath been seen,
Either in snuffs and packings³ of the dukes ;
Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
Against the old kind king ; or something deeper,

Whereof,

⁸ i. e. the air. MALONE.

⁹ The *main* seems to signify here the *main land*, the continent.

This interpretation sets the two objects of Lear's desire in proper opposition to each other. He wishes for the destruction of the world, either by the winds blowing the land into the waters, or raising the waters so as to overwhelm the land. STEEVENS.

² *Cubdrawn* has been explained to signify *drawn by nature to its young* ; whereas it means, *whose dugs are drawn dry by its young*. For no animals leave their dens by night but for prey. So that the meaning is, "that even hunger, and the support of its young, would not force the bear to leave his den in such a night." WARBURTON.

³ *Snuffs* are dislikes, and *packings* underhand contrivances.

We still talk of *packing* juries, and Antony says of Cleopatra, that she has "*pack'd* cards with Cæsar." STEEVENS.

Whereof, perchance, these are but furnishings; ⁴—

[But, true it is, from France there comes a power
Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,

Wise in our negligence, have secret feet

In some of our best ports,⁵ and are at point

To show their open banner.—Now to you:

If on my credit you dare build so far

To make your speed to Dover, you shall find

Some that will thank you, making just report

Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow

The king hath cause to plain.

I am a gentleman of blood and breeding;

And, from some knowledge and assurance, offer

This office to you.]

Gent. I will talk further with you.

Kent.

No, do not.

For confirmation that I am much more

Than my out wall, open this purse, and take

What it contains: If you shall see Cordelia,

(As fear not but you shall,) show her this ring;

And she will tell you who your fellow is

That

⁴ *Furnishings* are what we now call colours, external pretences.

JOHNSON.

A *furnish* anciently signified a sample. STEEVENS.

⁵ — *from France there comes a power*

Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,

Wise in our negligence, have secret feet

In some of our best ports,] This speech as it now stands is collected

from two editions: the lines degraded by Mr. Pope are found in the folio, not in the quarto; the following lines inclosed in crotchets are in the quarto, not in the folio. So that if the speech be read with omission of the former, it will stand according to the first edition; and if the former are read, and the lines that follow them omitted, it will then stand according to the second. The speech is now tedious, because it is formed by a coalition of both. The second edition is generally best, and was probably nearest to Shakspeare's last copy, but in this passage the first is preferable; for in the folio, the messenger is sent, he knows not why, he knows not whither. I suppose Shakspeare thought his plot opened rather too early, and made the alteration to veil the event from the audience; but trusting too much to himself, and full of a single purpose, he did not accommodate his new lines to the rest of the scene. *Scattered* means *divided, unsettled, disunited.* JOHNSON.

That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!
I will go seek the king.

Gent. Give me your hand : Have you no more to say ?

Kent. Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet ;
That, when we have found the king, (in which your pain
That way ; I'll this ;) he that first lights on him,
Holla the other. [*Exeunt severally.*]

S C E N E II.

Another part of the heath. Storm continues.

Enter LEAR and Fool.

Lear. Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks ! rage ! blow !
You cataraets, and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks !
You sulphurous and thought-executing⁷ fires,
Vaunt couriers to oak-cleaving thunder-bolts,
Singe my white head ! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world !
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,⁸
That make ingrateful man !

Fool. O nuncle, court holy-water⁹ in a dry house is better
than this rain-water out o' door. Good nuncle, in, and ask
thy daughters blessing ; here's a night pities neither wise men
nor fools.

Lear. Rumble thy bellyfull ! Spit, fire ! spout, rain !
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters :
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription ;² why then let fall
Your horrible pleasure ; here I stand, your slave,

A poor,

⁷ Doing execution with rapidity equal to thought. JOHNSON.

⁸ Crack nature's mould, and spill all the seeds of matter, that are
hoarded within it. THEOBALD.

To spill is to destroy. STEEVENS.

⁹ Ray, among his proverbial phrases, p. 184, mentions *court holy-water* to mean *fair words*. The French have the same phrase. *Eau benite de cour* ; fair empty words. STEEVENS.

² Subscription for obedience. WARBURTON.

A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man :—
 But yet I call you servile ministers,
 That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
 Your high-engender'd battles, 'gainst a head
 So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul! ³

Fool. He that has a house to put his head in, has a good head-piece.

*The cod-piece that will house,
 Before the head has any,
 The head and he shall louse;—
 So beggars marry many. ⁴
 The man that makes his toe
 What he his heart should make,
 Shall of a corn cry woe, ⁵
 And turn his sleep to wake.*

—for there was never yet fair woman, but she made mouths in a glass.

Enter KENT.

Lear. No, I will be the pattern of all patience,
 I will say nothing.

Kent. Who's there?

Fool. Marry, here's grace, and a cod-piece; that's a wise man, and a fool. ⁶

Kent. Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night,
 Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies
 Gallow ⁷ the very wanderers of the dark,

And

³ Shameful; dishonourable. JOHNSON.

⁴ i. e. A beggar marries a wife and lice. JOHNSON.

Rather, "So many beggars marry;" meaning, that they marry in the manner he has described, before they have houses to put their heads in. M. MASON.

⁵ i. e. be grieved, or pained. MALONE.

⁶ In Shakspeare's time, "the king's grace" was the usual expression. In the latter phrase, the speaker perhaps alludes to an old notion concerning fools. MALONE.

Alluding perhaps to the saying of a contemporary wit; that there is no discretion below the girdle. STEEVENS.

⁷ Gallow, a west-country word, signifies to scare or frighten.

WARBURTON.

So, the Somersetshire proverb: "The dunder do gally the beans." Beans are vulgarly supposed to shoot up faster after thunder storms.

STEEVENS.

And make them keep their caves : Since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard : man's nature cannot carry
The affliction, nor the fear.

Lear. Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp'd of justice : Hide thee, thou bloody hand ;
Thou perjur'd, and thou simular man of virtue
That art incestuous : Caitiff, to pieces shake,
That under covert and convenient seeming⁸
Hast practis'd on man's life !—Close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents,⁹ and cry
These dreadful summoners grace.²—I am a man,
More sinn'd against, than sinning.

Kent. Alack, bare-headed !
Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel ;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest ;
Repose you there : while I to this hard house,
(More hard than is the stone whereof 'tis raised ;
Which even but now, demanding after you,
Deny'd me to come in,) return, and force
Their scantied courtesy.

Lear. My wits begin to turn.—
Come on, my boy : How dost, my boy ? Art cold ?
I am cold myself.—Where is this straw, my fellow ?
The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel,
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool.

⁸ *Convenient* needs not be understood in any other than its usual and proper sense ; *accommodate* to the present purpose ; *suitable* to a design. *Convenient seeming* is *appearance* such as may promote his purpose to destroy. JOHNSON.

⁹ *Continent* stands for that which *contains* or *incloses*. JOHNSON.

² *Summoners* are here the *officers* that summon offenders before a proper tribunal. STEEVENS.

Fool. He that has a little tiny wit,—
 With heigh, ho, the wind and the rain,—
 Must make content with his fortunes fit;
 For the rain it raineth every day.

Lear. True, my good boy.—Come, bring us to this
 hovel. [Exeunt LEAR and KENT.]

Fool. This is a brave night to cool a courtezan.
 —I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than matter;
 When brewers mar their malt with water;
 When nobles are their tailors' tutors;³
 No hereticks burn'd, but wenches' suitors:⁴
 When every case in law is right;
 No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
 When flanders do not live in tongues;
 Nor cutpurves come not to throngs;
 When usurers tell their gold i' the field;
 And bawds and whores do churches build;—
 'Then shall the realm of Albion
 Come to great confusion.

Then comes the time, who lives to see't,
 That going shall be us'd with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his
 time. [Exit.]

SCENE III.

A Room in Gloster's Castle.

Enter GLOSTER and EDMUND.

Glo. Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural
 dealing: When I desired their leave that I might pity him,
 they took from me the use of mine own house; charged me,
 on pain of their perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of
 him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

Edm. Most savage, and unnatural!

Glo.

³ i. e. invent fashions for them. WARBURTON.

⁴ The disease to which wenches' suitors are particularly exposed, was
 called in Shakspeare's time the *brenning* or *burning*. JOHNSON.

So, in *Isaiah*, iii. 24: "— and burning instead of beauty."

Glo. Go to; say you nothing: There is division between the dukes; and a worse matter than that: I have received a letter this night;—'tis dangerous to be spoken;—I have lock'd the letter in my closet: these injuries the king now bears will be revenged home; there is part of a power already footed: we must incline to the king. I will seek him, and privily relieve him: go you, and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived: If he ask for me, I am ill, and gone to bed. If I die for it, as no less is threaten'd me, the king my old master must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund; pray you, be careful. [Exit.]

Edm. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke Instantly know; and of that letter too:—
This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me
That which my father loses; no less than all:
The younger rises, when the old doth fall.

S C E N E IV.

A part of the heath with a hovel.

Enter LEAR, KENT, and Fool.

Kent. Here is the place, my lord; good my lord, enter:
The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure. [Storm still.]

Lear. Let me alone.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Wilt break my heart?⁵

Kent. I'd rather break mine own: Good my lord, enter.

Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much, that this contentious
storm

Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee;
But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear:
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,

Thoud'st

⁵ I believe that Lear does not address this question to Kent, but to his own bosom. Perhaps therefore we should point the passage thus:

Wilt break, my heart?

The tenderness of Kent indeed induces him to reply, as to an interrogation that seemed to reflect on his own humanity. STEEVENS.

Thou'dst meet the bear i' the mouth. When the mind's
free,

The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
Save what beats there.—Filial ingratitude!
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand,
For lifting food to't?—But I will punish home:—
No, I will weep no more.—In such a night
To shut me out!—Pour on; I will endure:—
In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril!—
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all,—
O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;
No more of that,—

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Pry'thee, go in thyself; seek thine own ease;
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more.—But I'll go in:
In, boy; go first.⁶—[*to the Fool.*] You houseless poverty,—
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.—

[*Fool goes in.*]

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd⁷ and window'd raggedness, defend you

From

⁶ These two lines were added in the author's revision, and are only in the folio. They are very judiciously intended to represent that humility, or tenderness, or neglect of forms, which affliction forces on the mind. JOHNSON.

⁷ *Loop'd* is full of small apertures, such as were made in ancient castles, for firing ordnance, or spying the enemy. These were wider without than within, and were called *loops* or *loop-boles*: which Coles in his Latin Dictionary, 1679, renders by the word *fenestella*. MALONE.

Loops, as Mr. Henley observes, particularly in castles and towers, were often designed “for the admission of light, where windows would have been incommodious.” Shakspeare, he adds, “in *Othello*, and other places, has alluded to them.”

To discharge *ordnance*, however, from *loopboles*, according to Mr. Malone's supposition, was, I believe, never attempted, because almost impossible; although such outlets were sufficiently adapted to the use of arrows. Many also of these *loops*, still existing, were contrived before fire arms had been introduced. STEEVENS.

From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physick, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.

Edg. [*within.*] Fathom and half, fathom and half! Poor
Tom! [*The Fool runs out from the hovel.*]

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit.

Help me, help me!

Kent. Give me thy hand.—Who's there?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit; he says his name's poor Tom.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i' the straw?
Come forth.

Enter EDGAR, disguised as a Madman.

Edg. Away! the foul fiend follows me!—
Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.—
Humph! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

Lear. Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?
And art thou come to this?

Edg. Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom the foul
fiend hath led through fire and through flame,⁸ through
ford and whirlpool, over bog and quagmire; that hath laid
knives under his pillow,⁹ and halters in his pew; set rat-
bane by his porridge; made him proud of heart, to ride
on a bay trotting-horse over four-inch'd bridges, to course
his own shadow for a traitor:—Bless thy five wits!² Tom's
a-cold.—O, do de, do de, do de.—Bless thee from whirl-
winds, star-blasting, and taking!³ Do poor Tom some
charity, whom the foul fiend vexes: There could I have
him

⁸ Alluding to the *ignis fatuus*, supposed to be lights kindled by mischievous beings to lead travellers into destruction. JOHNSON.

⁹ He recounts the temptations by which he was prompted to suicide; the opportunities of destroying himself, which often occurred to him in his melancholy moods. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare found this charge against the fiend, with many others of the same nature, in Harfenet's *Declaration*, 1603; and has used the very words of it.

Infernal spirits are always represented as urging the wretched to self-destruction. STEEVENS.

² So the five senses were called by our old writers. PERCY.

³ To take is to blast, or strike with malignant influence. JOHNSON.

him now,—and there,—and there,—and there again, and there.

[*Storm continues.*]

Lear. What, have his daughters brought him to this pass?—

Could'st thou save nothing? Did'st thou give them all?

Fool. Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed.

Lear. Now, all the plagues that in the pendulous air Hang fated o'er men's faults, light on thy daughters!

Kent. He hath no daughters, sir.

Lear. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdu'd nature To such a lowness, but his unkind daughters.—

Is it the fashion, that discarded fathers

Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?

Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot

Those pelican daughters.⁴

Edg. Pillicock⁵ sat on pillicock's-hill;—

Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

Fool. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

Edg. Take heed o' the foul fiend: Obey thy parents; keep thy word justly; swear not; commit not with man's sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on proud array: Tom's a-cold.

Lear. What hast thou been?

Edg. A serving man, proud in heart and mind; that curl'd my hair; wore gloves in my cap,⁶ served the lust of my

⁴ The young pelican is fabled to suck the mother's blood. JOHNSON.

⁵ The inquisitive reader may find an explanation of this word in a note annexed to Sir Thomas Urquhart's translation of Rabelais, Vol. I. B. I. ch. ii. p. 184, edit. 1750. STEEVENS.

⁶ i. e. His mistress's favours: which was the fashion of that time. So, in the play called *Campaspe*: "Thy men turned to women, thy soldiers to lovers, gloves worn in velvet caps, instead of plumes in graven helmets."

WARBURTON.

It was anciently the custom to wear gloves in the hat on three distinct occasions, viz. as the favour of a mistress, the memorial of a friend, and as a mark to be challenged by an enemy. Prince Henry boasts that he will pluck a glove from the commonest creature, and fix it in his helmet.

Portia, in her assumed character, asks Bassanio for his gloves, which she says she will wear for his sake: And King Henry V. gives the pretended glove of Alençon to Fluellen, which afterwards occasions his quarrel with the English soldier. STEEVENS.

my mistress's heart, and did the act of darkness with her; swore as many oaths as I spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of heaven: one, that slept in the contriving of lust, and waked to do it: Wine loved I deeply; dice dearly; and in woman, out-paramour'd the Turk: False of heart, light of ear,⁷ bloody of hand; Hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness,⁸ dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks, betray thy poor heart to women: Keep thy foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets,⁹ thy pen from lender's books, and defy the foul fiend.—Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind: Says suum, mun, ha no nonny,² dolphin my boy, my boy, fessa; let him trot by. [Storm continues.

Lear.

⁷ *Credulous of evil*, ready to receive malicious reports. JOHNSON.

⁸ The Jesuits pretended to cast the seven deadly sins out of Mainz in the shape of those animals that represented them; and before each was cast out, Mainz by gestures acted that particular sin; curling his hair to show *pride*, vomiting for *gluttony*, gaping and snoring for *sloth*, &c.—Harfnet's book, p. 279, 280, &c. To this probably our author alludes."

STEEVENS.

⁹ It appeareth from the following passage in *Any Thing for a quiet Life*, a silly comedy, that *placket* doth not signify the petticoat in general, but only the aperture therein: "—between which is discovered the *open part* which is now called the *placket*." Bayly in his *Dictionary*, giveth the same account of the word.

Yet peradventure, our poet hath some deeper meaning in *The Winter's Tale*, where Autolycus saith—"You might have pinch'd a *placket*, it was senseless."

Impartiality nevertheless compelleth me to observe, that Master Coles in his *Dictionary* hath rendered *placket* by *sinus muliebris*: and a pleasant commentator who signeth himself T. C. hath also produced instances in favour of that signification; for, saith he,—but hear we his own words:

"Peradventure a placket signified neither a petticoat nor any part of one; but a *stomacher*." See the word *Torace* in Florio's Italian Dict. 1598. "The brest or bulke of a man.—Also a *placket* or *stomacher*."

So that, after all, this matter is enwrapped in much and painful uncertainty. AMNER.

² *Hey no nonny* is the burthen of a ballad in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (said to be written by Shakspeare in conjunction with Fletcher) and was probably common to many others.

Dolphin, my boy, my boy,

Cease, let him trot by;

It seemeth not that such a foe

From me or you would fly.

This

Lear. Why, thou were better in thy grave, than to answer with thy uncover'd body this extremity of the skies. —Is man no more than this? Consider him well: Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume:—Ha! here's three of us are sophisticated!—Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art.—Off, off, you lendings:—Come; unbutton here.— [tearing off his clothes.]

Fool. Pr'ythee, nuncle, be contented; this is a naughty³ night to swim in.—Now a little fire in a wild field were like an old lecher's heart; a small spark, all the rest of his body cold.—Look, here comes a walking fire.

Edg. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet:⁴ he begins at

This is a stanza from a very old ballad written on some battle fought in France, during which the king, unwilling to put the suspected valour of his son the *Dauphin*, i. e. *Dolpbin* (so called and spelt at those times) to the trial, is represented as desirous to restrain him from any attempt to establish an opinion of his courage on an adversary who wears the least appearance of strength; and at last assists in propping up a dead body against a tree for him to try his manhood upon. Therefore as different champions are supposed to cross the field, the king always discovers some objection to his attacking each of them, and repeats these two lines as every fresh personage is introduced.

Dolpbin, my boy, my boy, &c.

The song I have never seen, but had this account from an old gentleman, who was only able to repeat part of it, and died before I could have supposed the discovery would have been of the least importance to me.—The words, *says suum, mun*, are only to be found in the first folio, and were probably added by the players, who were likely enough to corrupt what they did not understand, or to add more of their own to what they already concluded to be nonsense. STEEVENS.

Cokes cries out in *Bartholomew Fair*:

“God's my life!—He shall be *Dauphin my boy*!” FARMER.

It is observable that the two songs to which Mr. Steevens refers for the burden of *Hey no nonny*, are both sung by girls distracted from disappointed love. HENLEY.

³ *Naughty* signifies *bad, unfit, improper*. This epithet which, as it stands here, excites a smile, in the age of Shakspeare was employed on serious occasions. The merriment of the fool therefore depended on his general image, and not on the quaintness of its auxiliary. STEEVENS.

⁴ — *Flibbertigibbet*:] We are not much acquainted with this fiend. Latimer in his sermons mentions him; and Heywood, among his sixte hundred

at curfew, and walks till the first cock; ⁵ he gives the web and the pin, ⁶ squints the eye, and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth.

*Saint Withold footed thrice the wold;
He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee! ⁷*

Kent.

hundred of *Epigrams*, edit. 1576, has the following, *Of calling one Flebergibet*:

“Thou Flebergibet, Flebergibet, thou wretch!
“Wottest thou whereto last part of that word dost stretch?
“Leave that word, or I’ll baste thee with a libet;
“Of all woords I hate woords that end with gibet,”

STEEVENS.

“Frateretto, *Fliberdigibbet*, Hoberdidance, Tocobatto, were four devils of the round or morrice These four had forty assistants under them, as themselves doe confesse.” *Harsnet*, p. 49. PERCY.

⁵ It is an old tradition that spirits were relieved from the confinement in which they were held during the day, at the time of curfew, that is, at the close of day, and were permitted to wander at large till the first cock-crowing. Hence in *The Tempest* they are said to “rejoice to hear the solemn curfew.” MALONE.

⁶ Diseases of the eye. JOHNSON.

⁷ We should read it thus:

Saint Withold footed thrice the wold,
He met the night-mare, and her name told,
Bid her alight, and her troth plight,
And aroynt thee, witch, aroynt thee right.

i. e. Saint Withold traversing the *wold* or *downs*, met the night-mare; who having told her name, he obliged her to *alight* from those persons whom she rides, and *plight her troth* to do no more mischief. This is taken from a story of him in his legend. Hence he was invoked as the patron saint against that distemper. And these verses were no other than a popular charm, or *night-spell* against the *Epiates*. The last line is the formal execration or apostrophe of the speaker of the charm to the witch, *aroynt thee right*, i. e. depart forthwith. *Bedlams*, gipsies, and such like vagabonds, used to sell these kinds of spells or charms to the people. They were of various kinds for various disorders, and addressed to various saints. WARBURTON.

This is likewise one of the “magical cures” for the *incubus*, quoted, with little variation, by Reginald Scott in his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584. STEEVENS.

In the old quarto the corruption is such as may deserve to be noted.

“Swith-

Kent. How fares your grace?

Enter GLOSTER, with a torch.

Lear. What's he?

Kent. Who's there? What is't you seek?

Glo. What are you there? Your names?

Edg. Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog, the toad,
the

"Swithalde footed thrice the olde anelthu night moore and her nine fold
bid her, O light and her troth plight and arint thee, with arint thee."

JOHNSON.

Her *nine fold* seems to be put (for the sake of the rhyme) instead of
her *nine foals*. I cannot find this adventure in the common legend of St.
Vitalis, who, I suppose, is here called St. Withold. TYRWHITT.

Shakspeare might have met with St. Withold in the old spurious play
of *King John*, where this saint is invoked by a Franciscan friar. The
wold I suppose to be the true reading.

Dr. Hill's reading, the *cold*, (mentioned in the next note,) is the read-
ing of Mr. Tate in his alteration of this play in 1681.

Lest the reader should suppose the compound—night-mare, has any
reference to *horse-flesh*, it may be observed that *masla*, Saxon, signifies
an incubus. STEEVENS.

It is pleasant to see the various readings of this passage. In a book
called the *Actor*, which has been ascribed to Dr. Hill, it is quoted
"Switbin footed thrice the *cold*." Mr. Colman has it in his alteration of
Lear,

"Switbin footed thrice the *world*."

The ancient reading is *the olds*: which is pompously corrected by Mr.
Theobald, with the help of his friend Mr. Bishop, to the *wolds*: in fact
it is the same word. Spelman writes, *Burton upon olds*: the provincial
pronunciation is still the *oles*: and that probably was the vulgar ortho-
graphy. Let us read then,

St. Witbold footed thrice the *oles*,

He met the night-mare, and her nine *foles*, &c. FARMER.

I was surprised to see in the *Appendix* to the last edition of Shakspeare,
[i. e. that of 1773] that my reading of this passage was "Switbin footed
thrice the *world*." I have ever been averse to capricious variations of
the old text; and, in the present instance, the rhyme, as well as the
sense, would have induced me to abide by it. *World* was merely an error
of the press. *Wold* is a word still in use in the North of England; signi-
fying a kind of down near the sea. A large tract of country in the East-
Riding of Yorkshire is called the *Woulds*. COLMAN.

In Leicestershire, Kent, and some other counties, large tracts of land
are in like manner distinguished. NICHOLS.

Both the quartos and the folio have *old*, not *olds*. *Old* was merely the
word *wold* misspelled, from following the sound.

Her *nine fold* are her *nine familiars*. MALONE.

the tadpole, the wall-newt, and the water;⁸ that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for fallets; swallows the old rat, and the ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle of the standing-pool; who is whipp'd from tything to tything,⁹ and stock'd, punish'd, and imprison'd; who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body, horse to ride, and weapon to wear,—

*But mice, and rats, and such small deer,
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.²*

Beware my follower:—Peace, Smolkin; peace,³ thou fiend!

Glo. What, hath your grace no better company?

Edg. The prince of darkness is a fine gentleman;⁴ Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.⁵

Glo.

⁸ i. e. the water-newt. This was the phraseology of Shakspeare's time. "He was a wise man and a merry," was the common language. So Falstaff says to Shallow, "he is your serving-man, and your husband," i. e. husband-man. MALONE.

⁹ A *tytbing* is a division of a place, a district; the same in the country, as a ward in the city. In the Saxon times every hundred was divided into *tytbing*s. Edgar alludes to the acts of *Queen Elizabeth* and *James I.* against rogues, vagabonds, &c. In the Stat. 39 Eliz. ch. 4. it is enacted, that every vagabond, &c. shall be publicly *whipped and sent* from parish to parish. STEEVENS.

² This distich is part of a description given in the old metrical romance of *Sir Bevis*, of the hardships suffered by *Bevis* when confined for seven years in a dungeon:

"Rattes and myce and such smal dere

"Was his meate that seven yere." Sig. F. iij. PERCY.

³ "The names of other punie spirits cast out of Trayford were these: Hilco, Smolkin, Hillio," &c. Harfnet, p. 49. PERCY.

⁴ This is spoken in resentment of what Gloster had just said—"Has your grace no better company?" STEEVENS.

⁵ So, in Harfnet's *Declaration*, *Mabo* was the chief devil that had possession of Sarah Williams; but another of the possessed, named Richard Mainy, was molested by a still more considerable fiend called *Modu*. See the book already mentioned, p. 268, where the said Richard Mainy deposes: "Furthermore it is pretended, . . . that there remaineth still in mee the prince of all other devils, whose name should be *Modu*;" he is elsewhere called, "the prince *Modu*:" so, p. 269, "When the said priests had dispatched their business at Hackney (where they had been exorcising Sarah Williams) they then returned towards mee, uppon pretence to cast the great prince *Modu* . . . out mee." STEEVENS.

In

Glo. Our flesh and blood, my lord, is grown so vile,
That it doth hate what gets it.

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold.

Glo. Go in with me; my duty cannot suffer ⁶
To obey in all your daughters' hard commands :
Though their injunction be to bar my doors,
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you ;
Yet have I ventur'd to come seek you out,
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

Lear. First let me talk with this philosopher :—
What is the cause of thunder?

Kent. Good my lord, take his offer;
Go into the house.

Lear. I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban : ⁷—
What is your study ?

Edg. How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

Lear. Let me ask you one word in private.

Kent. Impórtune him once more to go, my lord,
His wits begin to unsettle, ⁸

Glo:

In *The Goblins*, by Sir John Suckling, a catch is introduced which concludes with these two lines :

“ The prince of darkness is a gentleman :

“ Mahu, Mahu is his name.”

I am inclined to think this catch not to be the production of Suckling, but the original referred to by Edgar's speech. REED.

⁶ i. e. my duty will not suffer me, &c. M. MASON.

⁷ Ben Jonson in his *Masque of Pan's Anniversary*, has introduced a *Tinker* whom he calls a *learned Theban*, perhaps in ridicule of this passage.

STEEVENS.

⁸ On this occasion, I cannot prevail on myself to omit the following excellent remark of Mr. Horace Walpole, [now Lord Orford] inserted in the postscript to his *Mysterious Mother*. He observes, that when “ *Belvidera* talks of

“ *Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber,*—

she is not mad, but light-headed. When madness has taken possession of a person, such character ceases to be fit for the stage, or at least should appear there but for a short time ; it being the business of the theatre to exhibit passions, not distempers. The finest picture ever drawn, of a head discomposed by misfortune, is that of *King Lear*. His thoughts dwell on the ingratitude of his daughters, and every sentence that falls from his wildness excites reflection and pity. Had frenzy entirely seized him, our compassion would abate : we should conclude that he no longer felt unhappiness. Shakspeare wrote as a philosopher, Otway as a poet.”

STEEVENS.

Glo. Can'st thou blame him?
 His daughters seek his death :—Ah, that good Kent!—
 He said it would be thus :—Poor banish'd man!—
 'Thou say'st, the king grows mad ; I'll tell thee, friend,
 I am almost mad myself : I had a son,
 Now outlaw'd from my blood ; he fought my life,
 But lately, very late ; I lov'd him, friend,—
 No father his son dearer : true to tell thee, [*storm continues.*
 The grief hath craz'd my wits. What a night's this!
 I do beseech your grace,—

Lear. O, cry you mercy,
 Noble philosopher, your company.

Edg. Tom's a-cold.

Glo. In, fellow, there, to the hovel : keep thee warm.

Lear. Come, let's in all.

Kent. This way, my lord.

Lear. With him ;
 I will keep still with my philosopher.

Kent. Good my lord, sooth him ; let him take the fellow.

Glo. Take him you on.

Kent. Sirrah, come on ; go along with us.

Lear. Come, good Athenian.

Glo. No words, no words :

Hush.

Edg. *Child*⁹ Rowland to the dark tower came,

His word was still,—Fie, foh, and fum;

I smell the blood of a British man.

[*Exeunt.*

⁹ The word *child* (however it came to have this sense) is often applied to *Knights*, &c. in old historical songs and romances ; of this, innumerable instances occur in *The Reliques of ancient English Poetry*. PERCY.

Child is a common term in our old metrical romances and ballads ; and is generally, if not always, applied to the hero or principal personage, who is sometimes a *knight*, and sometimes a *thief*. *Syr Tyramoure* is repeatedly so called both before and after his knighthood. I think, however, that this line is part of a translation of some Spanish, or perhaps, French, ballad. But the two following lines evidently belong to a different subject : I find them in the Second part of *Jack and the Giants*, which, if not as old as Shakspeare's time, may have been compiled from something that was so : They are uttered by a giant :

“ *Fee, faw, fum,*

“ *I smell the blood of an Englishman ;*

“ *Be*

SCENE

SCENE V.

*A Room in Gloster's Castle.**Enter CORNWALL and EDMUND.**Corn.* I will have my revenge, ere I depart his house.*Edm.* How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.*Corn.* I now perceive, it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death; but a provoking merit,² set a-work by a reproveable badness in himself.*Edm.* How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector!*Corn.* Go with me to the duchess.*Edm.* If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.*Corn.* True, or false, it hath made thee earl of Gloster. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.*Edm.* [*Aside.*] If I find him comforting³ the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully.—I will persevere in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.*Corn.*

“Be he alive, or be he dead,

“I'll grind his bones to make me bread.”

English is here judiciously changed to *British*, because the characters are *Britons*, and the scene is laid long before the English had any thing to do with this country. Our author is not so attentive to propriety on every occasion. RITSON.² *Provoking*, here means *stimulating*; a merit he felt in himself, which irritated him against a father that had none. M. MASON.

Cornwall, I suppose, means the merit of Edmund, which, being noticed by Gloster, provoked or instigated Edgar to seek his father's death. Dr. Warburton conceived that the merit spoken of was that of Edgar. But how is this consistent with the rest of the sentence? MALONE.

³ He uses the word in the juridical sense for *supporting*, *helping*, according to its derivation; *salvia confortat nervos*.—*Schol. Sal.* JOHNSON.Johnson refines too much on this passage; *comforting* means merely giving *comfort* or *assistance*. So Gloster says in the beginning of the next scene:“——I will piece out the *comfort* with what addition I can.”

Corn. I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. [Exeunt.

SCENE VI.

A Chamber in a Farm-house, adjoining the Castle.

Enter GLOSTER, LEAR, KENT, Fool and EDGAR.

Glo. Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully: I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can: I will not be long from you.

Kent. All the power of his wits has given way to his impatience:—The gods reward your kindness!

[Exit GLOSTER.

Edg. Frateretto calls me; and tells me, Nero is an angler⁴ in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent,⁵ and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. Pr'ythee, nuncle, tell me, whether a madman be a gentleman, or a yeoman?

Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No; he's a yeoman, that has a gentleman to his son: for he's a mad yeoman, that sees his son a gentleman before him.

Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits Come hissing in upon them:—

Edg. The foul fiend bites my back.

Fool. He's mad, that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health,⁶ a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

Lear.

⁴ Mr. Upton observes that Rabelais, B. II. c. xxx. says that Nero was a fidler in hell, and Trajan an angler.

Nero is introduced in the present play above 800 years before he was born. MALONE.

The *History of Gargantua* had appeared in English before 1575, being mentioned in Langham's *Lester*, printed in that year. RITSON.

⁵ Perhaps he is here addressing the *Fool*. *Fools* were anciently called *Innocents*. So, in *All's well that ends well*: “—— the Sheriff's *Fool*.— a dumb innocent, that could not say him nay.” STEEVENS.

⁶ Without doubt we should read—*heels*, i. e. to stand behind him.

WARBURTON.

Shakspeare is here speaking not of things maliciously treacherous, but of things uncertain and not durable. A horse is above all other animals subject to diseases. JOHNSON.

Heels

Lear. It shall be done, I will arraign them straight :—
Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer ;—

[To EDGAR.]

Thou, sapient sir, sit here. [To the Fool.]—Now you she
foxes !—

Edg. Look, where he stands and glares !—Wantest thou
eyes⁷ at trial, madam ?⁸

Come o'er the bourn,⁹ Bessy, to me :—

Fool. *Her boat hath a leak,*

And she must not speak

Why she dares not come over to thee.

Edg.

Heels is certainly right. “Trust not a horse’s heel, nor a dog’s tooth,” is a proverb in Ray’s collection ; as ancient at least as the time of our Edward II :

Et ideo Babio in comædiis insinuat, dicens ;

In fide, dente, pede, mulieris, equi, canis, est fraus.

Hoc sic vulgariter est dici :

“Till horsis fete thou never troist,

“Till hondis toth, no womans fuith.

Forduni Scotichronicon, L. XIV. c. xxxñ.

That in the text is probably from the *Italian*. RITSON.

⁷ I am not confident that I understand the meaning of this desultory speech. When Edgar says, *Look where he stands and glares !* he seems to be speaking in the character of a mad man, who thinks he sees the fiend. *Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam ?* is a question which appears to be addressed to the visionary Goneril, or some other abandoned female, and may signify, *Do you want to attract admiration, even while you stand at the bar of justice ?* Mr. Seward proposes to read, *wantest* instead of *wantest*. STEEVENS.

⁸ It may be observed that Edgar, being supposed to be found by chance, and therefore to have no knowledge of the rest, connects not his ideas with those of Lear, but pursues his own train of delirious or fantastick thought. To these words, *At trial, madam ?* I think therefore that the name of Lear should be put. The process of the dialogue will support this conjecture. JOHNSON.

⁹ Old copies read—*broome*.

As there is no relation between *broom* and a *boat*, we may better read :

Come o'er the brook, Bessy, to me. JOHNSON.

At the beginning of *A very mery and pythie comedie, called, The longer thou livest, the more Foole thou art, &c.* Imprinted at London by Wylliam How, &c. black letter, no date, “Entreth *Moros*, counterfaiting a waine gesture and foolish countenance, synging the foote of many songs, as fooles were wont ;” and among them is this passage, which Dr. Johnson has very justly suspected of corruption :

“Com

Edg. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale.² *Hopdance* cries in Tom's belly³ for two white herring.⁴ Croak not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

Kent.

“Com over the *boorne* Bessé
 “My little pretie Bessé,
 “Com over the *boorne*, Bessé, to me.”

This song was entered on the books of the Stationers' Company in the year 1564.

A *boorne* in the north signifies a *rivulet* or *brook*. Hence the names of many of our villages terminate in *burn*, as *Milburn*, *Sherburn*, &c. The former quotation, at once confirms the justness of Dr. Johnson's remark, and supports the reading.

To this I may add, that *boorne*, a boundary, is from the French *borne*. *Bourne*, or (as it ought to be spelt) *burn*, a rivulet, is from the German *burn*, or *born*, a well. STEEVENS.

There is a peculiar propriety in this address, that has not, I believe, been hitherto observed. *Bessy* and poor *Tom*, it seems, usually travelled together. The author of *The Court of Conscience, or Dick Whippers Sessions*, 1607, describing *beggars, idle rogues, and counterfeit madmen*, thus speaks of these associates:

“Another sort there is among you; they
 “Do rage with furie as if they were so frantique
 “They knew not what they did, but every day
 “Make sport with stick and flowers like an antique;
 “Stowt roge and harlot counterfeited gomme;
 “One calls herself poor *Bessé*, the other *Tom*.” MALONE.

² Another deponent in Harfnet's book, (p. 225,) says, that the mistress of the house kept a *nightingale* in a cage, which being one night called, and conveyed away into the garden, it was pretended the devil had killed it in spite. Perhaps this passage suggested to Shakspeare the circumstance of Tom's being haunted in the voice of a nightingale.

PERCY.

³ In Harfnet's book, p. 194, 195, Sarah Williams (one of the pretended demoniacs) deposes, “—that if at any time she did belch, as often times she did by reason that shee was troubled with a wind in her stomacke, the priests would say at such times, that then the spirit began to rise in her . . . and that the wind was the devil.” And, “as she saith, if they heard any *croaking* in her belly . . . then they would make a wonderful matter of that.” *Hoberdidance* is mentioned before in Dr. Percy's note. STEEVENS.

“One time shee remembereth, that shee having the said *croaking* in her belly, they said it was the *devil* that was about the bed, that spake with the voice of a toad.” *Ibidem*. MALONE.

⁴ *White herrings* are pickled herrings. See *The Northumberland Household Book*, p. 8. STEEVENS.

K I N G L E A R.

Kent. How do you, sir? Stand you not so amaz'd:
Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

Lear. I'll see their trial first:—Bring in the evidence.—
Thou robed man of justice, take thy place;— [*To EDGAR.*
And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity, [*To the Fool.*
Bench by his side:—You are of the commission,
Sit you too. [*To KENT.*

Edg. Let us deal justly.

*Sleepest, or wakest thou, jolly shephérð?*³

Thy sheep be in the corn;

And for one blast of thy minikin⁴ mouth,

Thy sheep shall take no harm.

*Pur!*⁵ the cat is grey.

Lear. Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here take my
oath before this honourable assembly, she kick'd the poor
king her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress; Is your name Goneril?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.⁶

Lear. And here's another, whose warp'd looks proclaim
What store her heart is made of,—Stop her there!

Arms, arms, sword, fire!—Corruption in the place!

False justiceer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

Edg. Bless thy five wits!

Kent. O pity!—Sir, where is the patience now,
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

Edg.

³ This seems to be a stanza of some pastoral song. A shepherd is desired to pipe, and the request is enforced by a promise, that though his sheep be in the corn, i. e. committing a trespass by his negligence, implied in the question, *Sleepest thou or wakest?* Yet a single tune upon his pipe shall secure them from the pound. JOHNSON.

⁴ *Minikin* was anciently a term of endearment. So, in the enterlude of *The Repentance of Marie Magdalaine*, 1567, the *Vice* says, “What mynikin carnal concupiscence!” Barrett, in his *Alvarie, or Quadruple Dictionary*, 1580, interprets *feat*, by “proper, well-fashioned, minikin, handsome.” STEEVENS.

⁵ This may be only an imitation of the noise made by a cat. *Purre* is, however, one of the devils mentioned in Harfnet's book, p. 50.

MALONE.

⁶ This is a proverbial expression which occurs likewise in *Mother mbie*, 1594, by Lyly. STEEVENS.

Edg. My tears begin to take his part so much,
They'll mar my counterfeiting. [Aside.

Lear. The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me.

Edg. Tom will throw his head at them:—Avaunt, you curs!

Be thy mouth or black or white,⁷
Tooth that poisons if it bite;
Mastiff, grey-hound, mongrel grim,
Hound or spaniel, brach, or lym;⁸
Or bobtail like,⁹ or trundle-tail;²
Tom will make them weep and wail:
For, with throwing thus my head,
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.

Do

⁷ To have the roof of the mouth black is in some dogs a proof that their breed is genuine. STEEVENS.

⁸ Names of particular sorts of dogs. POPE.

In Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, Quarlous says,—“all the limmers of the city should have drawn after you by the scent.”—A *limmer* or *leamer*, a dog of the chace, was so called from the *leam* or leash in which he was held till he was let slip. I have this information from *Caius de Canibus Britannicis*.

The late Mr. Hawkins, in his notes to *The Return from Parnassus*, p. 237, says, that a *racbe* is a dog that hunts by scent wild beasts, birds, and even fishes, and that the female of it is called a *brache*: and in *Magnificence*, an ancient interlude or morality, by Skelton; printed by Rastell, no date, is the following line;

“Here is a leyshe of *ratcbes* to renne an hare.” STEEVENS.

What is here said of a *racbe* might perhaps be taken by Mr. Hawkins, from Holinshed's *Description of Scotland*, p. 14, where the *fleuthound* means a bloodhound. The females of all dogs were once called *braches*; and Ulitius upon Grattius observes, “*Racha Saxonibus canem significabat unde Scoti hodie Racbe pro cane femina habent, quod Anglis est Brache.*” TOLLET.

The old copies have—*brache* or *bym*. The emendation was made by Sir Thomas Hanmer. A *brache* signified a particular kind of hound, and also a bitch. A *lym* or *lyme*, was a blood-hound. See Minshew's *Dict.* in. v. MALONE.

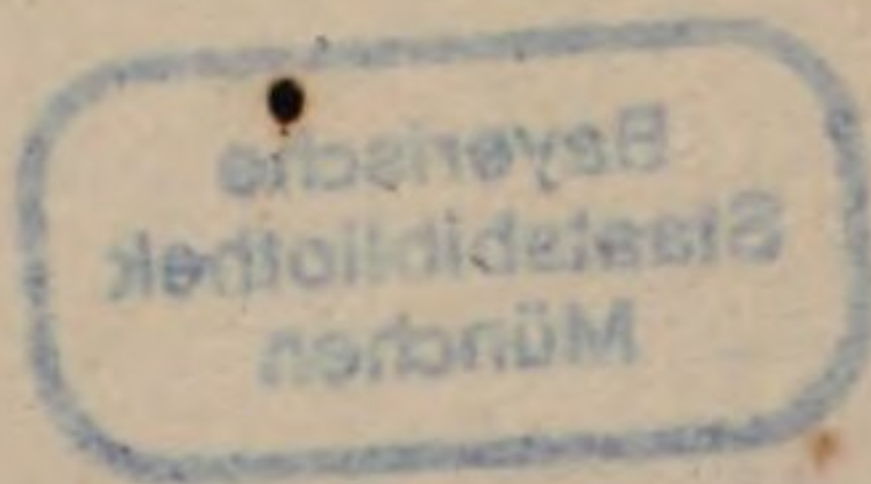
⁹ *Tijk* is the Runic word for a little, or worthless dog:

“Are Mr. Robinson's dogs turn'd *tikes* with a wanion?”

Witches of Lancaster, 1634. STEEVENS.

² This sort of dog is mentioned in *A Woman killed with Kindness*, 1617:

“——your dogs are *trundle-tails* and curs.” STEEVENS.



Do de, de de. *Sessia*.³ Come, march to wakes and fairs,
and market towns:—Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.⁴

Lear. Then let them anatomize Regan, see what breeds
about her heart: Is there any cause in nature, that makes
these hard hearts?—You, sir, I entertain you for one of my
hundred; only, I do not like the fashion of your garments:
you

³ Here is *seffey* again, which I take to be the French word *cessez* pronounced *cesséy*, which was, I suppose, like some others in common use among us. It is an interjection enforcing cessation of any action, like, *be quiet, have done*. It seems to have been gradually corrupted into, *so, so*. JOHNSON.

This word is wanting in the quarto: in the folio it is printed *sese*. It is difficult in this place to say what is meant by it. It should be remembered, that just before, Edgar had been calling on *Bessy* to come to him: and he may now with equal propriety invite *Sessy* (perhaps a female name corrupted from *Cecilia*) to attend him to *wakes and fairs*. Nor is it impossible but that this may be a part of some old song, and originally stood thus:

Sissy, come march to wakes,
And fairs, and market towns.—— STEEVENS.

Dr. Johnson is surely right, in supposing that *seffy* is a corruption of *cessez*, *be quiet, stop, hold, let alone*. It is so used by Christoforo Sly, the drunken Tinker, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and by Edgar himself in a preceding scene—“*Dolphin, my boy, Sessy; let him trot by.*”—But it does not seem equally clear that it has been corrupted into *so, so*.

RITSON.

⁴ Men that begged under pretence of lunacy used formerly to carry a horn, and blow it through the streets. JOHNSON.

A *born* is at this day employed in many places in the country as a cup for drinking, but anciently the use of it was much more general. *Thy born is dry*, however, appears to be a proverbial expression, introduced when a man has nothing further to offer, when he has said all he had to say. *Such a one's pipe's out*, is a phrase current in Ireland on the same occasion.

I suppose Edgar to speak these words *aside*. Being quite weary of his Tom o' Bedlam's part, and finding himself unable to support it any longer, he says privately, “—I can no more: all my materials for sustaining the character of Poor Tom are now exhausted; *my born is dry*: i. e. has nothing more in it; and accordingly we have no more of his dissembled madness till he meets his father in the next act, when he resumes it for a speech or two, but not without expressing the same dislike of it that he expresses here, “—I cannot daub it further.” STEEVENS.

you will say, they are Persian attire;⁵ but let them be changed. [To EDGAR.

Kent. Now, good my lord, lie here,⁶ and rest awhile.

Lear. Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains: So, so, so: We'll go to supper i'the morning: So, so, so.

Fool. And I'll go to bed at noon.

Re-enter GLOSTER.

Glo. Come hither, friend: Where is the king my master?

Kent. Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are gone.

Glo. Good friend, I pr'ythee take him in thy arms; I have o'er-heard a plot of death upon him:

There is a litter ready; lay him in't,

And drive toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet

Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master:

If thou should'st dally half an hour, his life,

With thine, and all that offer to defend him,

Stand in assured loss: Take up, take up;

And follow me, that will some provision

Give thee quick conduct.

[*Kent.* Oppress'd nature sleeps: ⁷—

This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken senses,

Which, if convenience will not allow,

Stand in hard cure.—Come, help to bear thy master;

Thou

⁵ Alluding perhaps to Clytus refusing the Persian robes offered him by Alexander. STEEVENS.

⁶ i. e. on the cushions to which he points. He had before said,

“Will you lie down, and rest upon the cushions?”

MALONE.

⁷ These two concluding speeches by Kent and Edgar, and which by no means ought to have been cut off, I have restored from the old quarto. The soliloquy of Edgar is extremely fine; and the sentiments of it are drawn equally from nature and the subject. Besides, with regard to the stage, it is absolutely necessary: for as Edgar is not designed, in the constitution of the play, to attend the king to Dover; how absurd would it look for a character of his importance to quit the scene without one word said, or the least intimation what we are to expect from him?

THEOBALD.

The lines inserted from the quarto are in crotchets. The omission of them in the folio is certainly faulty: yet I believe the folio is printed from Shakspeare's last revision, carelessly and hastily performed, with more thought of shortening the scenes, than of continuing the action.

JOHNSON.

Thou must not stay behind.

[*To the Fool.*

Glo. Come, come, away.

[*Exeunt KENT, GLOSTER, and the Fool, bearing off the king.*

Edg. When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
Who alone suffers, suffers most i' the mind;
Leaving free things,⁸ and happy shows, behind:
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erstep,
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that, which makes me bend, makes the king bow;
He childed, as I father'd!—Tom, away:
Mark the high noises;⁹ and thyself bewray,²
When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,
In thy just proof, repeals, and reconciles thee.
What will hap more to-night, safe scape the king!
Lurk, lurk.]

[*Exit.*

SCENE VII.

A Room in Gloster's Castle.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND, and Servants.

Corn. Post speedily to my lord your husband; show him this letter:—the army of France is landed:—Seek out the villain Gloster.

[*Exeunt some of the Servants.*

Reg. Hang him instantly.

Gon.

⁸ States clear from distress. JOHNSON.

⁹ Attend to the great events that are approaching, and make thyself known when that *false opinion* now prevailing against thee shall, in consequence of *just proof* of thy integrity, revoke its erroneous sentence, and recall thee to honour and reconciliation. JOHNSON.

By the *high noises*, I believe, are meant the loud tumults of the approaching war. STEEVENS.

The *high noises* are perhaps the calamities and quarrels of those in a higher station than Edgar, of which he has been just speaking. The words, however, may allude to the proclamation which had been made for bringing in Edgar. MALONE.

² *Bewray*, which at present has only a dirty meaning, anciently signified to *betray*, to *discover*. STEEVENS.

Gon. Pluck out his eyes.

Corn. Leave him to my displeasure.—Edmund, keep you our sister company; the revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father, are not fit for your beholding. Advise the duke, where you are going, to a most festinate preparation; we are bound to the like. Our posts shall be swift, and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell, dear sister;—farewell, my lord of Gloster.³

Enter Steward.

How now? Where's the king?

Stew. My lord of Gloster hath convey'd him hence: Some five or six and thirty of his knights, Hot questrists⁴ after him, met him at gate; Who, with some other of the lord's dependants, Are gone with him towards Dover; where they boast To have well-arm'd friends.

Corn. Get horses for your mistress.

Gon. Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

[*Exeunt GONERIL and EDMUND.*

Corn. Edmund, farewell.—Go, seek the traitor Gloster, Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us:

[*Exeunt other Servants.*

Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice; yet our power
Shall do a courtesy to our wrath,⁵ which men
May blame, but not control. Who's there? The traitor?

Re-enter

³ Meaning Edmund, newly invested with his father's titles. The steward, speaking immediately after, mentions the old earl by the same title. JOHNSON.

⁴ A *questrist* is one who goes in search or *quest* of another. Mr. Pope and Sir T. Hanmer read - *questers*. STEEVENS.

⁵ To do a *courtesy* is to gratify, to comply with. To *pass*, is to pass a judicial sentence. JOHNSON.

I believe, "do a *courtesy* to our wrath," simply means—*bend* to our wrath, as a *courtesy* is made by *bending* the body.

The original of the expression, to *pass* on any one, may be traced from *Magna Charta*:

"—nec super eum ibimus, nisi per legale iudicium parium suorum." STEEVENS.

Re-enter Servants, with GLOSTER.

Reg. Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

Corn. Bind fast his corky arms.⁶

Glo. What mean your graces? — Good my friends, consider

You are my guests: do me no foul play, friends.

Corn. Bind him, I say. [Servants bind him.]

Reg. Hard, hard: — O filthy traitor!

Glo. Unmerciful lady as you are, I am none.

Corn. To this chair bind him: — Villain, thou shalt find — [REGAN plucks his beard.]

Glo. By the kind gods,⁷ 'tis most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

Reg. So white, and such a traitor!

Glo. Naughty lady,
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,
Will quicken,⁸ and accuse thee: I am your host;
With robbers' hands, my hospitable favours⁹
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

Corn.

⁶ Dry, wither'd, husky arms. JOHNSON.

As Shakspeare appears from other passages of this play to have had in his eye *Bishop Harsnet's Declaration of egregious Popish Impostures*, &c. 1603, 4to, it is probable, that this very expressive, but peculiar epithet, *corky*, was suggested to him by a passage in that very curious pamphlet. "It would pose all the cunning exorcists, that are this day to be found, to teach an old *corkie* woman to writhe, tumble, curvet, and fetch her morrice gamboles, as Martha Breffier (one of the possessed mentioned in the pamphlet) did." PERCY.

⁷ We are not to understand by this the gods in general, who are beneficent and kind to men; but that particular species of them called by the ancients *dii hospitales*, kind gods. So, Plautus, in *Pænulo*:

"*Deum hospitalem ac tesseram mecum fero.*" WARBURTON.

Shakspeare hardly received any assistance from mythology to furnish out a proper oath for Gloster. People always invoke their dieties as they would have them show themselves at particular times in their favour; and he accordingly calls those *kind gods* whom he would wish to find so on this occasion. He does so yet a second time in this scene. Our own liturgy will sufficiently evince the truth of my supposition. STEEVENS.

⁸ i. e. quicken into life. M. MASON.

⁹ *Favours* means the same as *features*, i. e. the different parts of which a face is composed. STEEVENS.

Corn. Come, fir, what letters had you late from France?

Reg. Be simple-answer'd, for we know the truth.

Corn. And what confederacy have you with the traitors
Late footed in the kingdom?

Reg. To whose hands have you sent the lunatick king?
Speak.

Glo. I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,
And not from one oppos'd.

Corn.

Cunning.

Reg.

And false.

Corn. Where hast thou sent the king?

Glo.

To Dover.

Reg.

Wherefore

To Dover? Wast thou not charg'd at thy peril—

Corn. Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer that.

Glo. I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the course.²

Reg. Wherefore to Dover?

Glo. Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs,³
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endur'd, would have buoy'd up,
And quench'd the stelled fires: yet, poor old heart,
He help the heavens to rain.

If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,⁴
Thou should'st have said, *Good porter turn the key*;
All cruels else subscrib'd: ⁵—But I shall see
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

Corn. See it shalt thou never:—Fellows, hold the
chair:—

Upon these eyes⁶ of thine I'll set my foot.

[*GLOSTER is held down in his chair, while CORNWALL
plucks out one of his eyes, and sets his foot on it.* *Glo.*

² The running of the dogs upon me. JOHNSON.

³ The quartos read—*rash* boarish fangs
To *rash* is the old hunting term for the stroke made by a wild bear
with his fangs. STEEVENS.

⁴ Thus the folio. Both the quartos read,—that *dearn* time.—
Dearn is a north-country word, signifying *lonely*, *solitary*, *melancholy*,
uncomfortable, far from neighbours. STEEVENS.

⁵ Yielded, submitted to the necessity of the occasion. JOHNSON.

Glo. He, that will think to live till he be old,
Give me some help :—O cruel ! O ye gods !

Reg. One side will mock another ; the other too.

Corn. If you see vengeance,—

Serv. Hold your hand, my lord :

I have serv'd you ever since I was a child ;

But better service have I never done you,

Than now to bid you hold.

Reg. How now, you dog ?

Serv. If you did wear a beard upon your chin,

I'd shake it on this quarrel : What do you mean ?

Corn. My villain ! ⁷ [*draws and runs at him.*

Serv. Nay, then come on, and take the chance of anger.

[*draws. They fight. CORNWALL is wounded.*

Reg. Give me thy sword.—[*to another Serv.*] A peasant
stand up thus !

[*snatches a sword, comes behind, and stabs him.*

Serv. O, I am slain !—My lord, you have one eye left

To see some mischief on him :—O ! [*dies.*

Corn. Lest it see more, prevent it :—Out, vile jelly !
Where is thy lustre now ?

[*tears out GLOSTER'S other eye, and throws it on the ground.*

Glo. All dark and comfortless.—Where's my son Ed-
mund ?

Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature,

To quit this horrid act.

Reg. Out, treacherous villain !

Thou call'st on him that hates thee : it was he

That

⁶ In *Selimas, Emperor of the Turks*, one of the sons of *Bajazet* pulls out the eyes of an aga on the stage, and says,

“ Yes, thou shalt live, but never see that day,

“ Wanting the tapers that should give thee light.

[*“ Pulls out his eyes.”*

Immediately after, his hands are cut off. I have introduced this passage to show that *Shakspeare's* drama was not more sanguinary than that of his contemporaries. STEEVENS.

In *Marston's Antonio's Revenge*, 1602. *Piero's* tongue is torn out on the stage. MALONE.

⁷ Villain is here perhaps used in its original sense of one in servitude.

STEEVENS.

That made the overture⁸ of thy treasons to us;
Who is too good to pity thee.

Glo. O my follies!

Then Edgar was abus'd.—

Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

Reg. Go, thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover.—How is't, my lord? How look you?

Corn. I have receiv'd a hurt:—Follow me, lady.—

Turn out that eyeless villain;—throw this slave

Upon the dunghill.—Regan, I bleed apace:

Untimely comes this hurt: Give me your arm.

[*Exit CORNWALL, led by REGAN;—Servants unbind*

GLOSTER, and lead him out.

1. *Serv.* I'll never care what wickedness I do,⁹
If this man come to good.

2. *Serv.* If she live long,
And, in the end, meet the old course of death,²
Women will all turn monsters.

1. *Serv.* Let's follow the old earl, and get the Bedlam
To lead him where he would; his roguish madness
Allows itself to any thing.

2. *Serv.* Go thou; I'll fetch some flax, and whites of
eggs,
To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help him!

[*Exeunt severally.*

⁸ *Overture* is here used for an opening or discovery. It was he who first laid thy treasons open to us. Coles in his Dict. 1679, renders *Overture*, by *apertior apertura*. An overt act of treason, is the technical phrase. MALONE.

⁹ This short dialogue I have inserted from the old quarto, because I think it full of nature. Servants could hardly see such a barbarity committed on their master, without pity; and the vengeance that they presume must overtake the actors of it, is a sentiment and doctrine well worthy of the stage. THEOBALD.

It is not necessary to suppose them the servants of Gloster; for Cornwall was opposed to extremity by his own servant. JOHNSON.

² That is, *die a natural death*. MALONE.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

*The Heath.**Enter EDGAR.*

Edg. Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,³
 Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,
 The lowest, and most dejected thing of fortune,
 Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:
 The lamentable change is from the best;
 The worst returns to laughter. Welcome then,
 Thou unsubstantial air, that I embrace!
 The wretch, that thou hast blown unto the worst,
 Owes nothing to thy blasts.—But who comes here?—

Enter

³ The meaning is, 'Tis better to be thus contemned, and known to yourself to be contemned. Or perhaps there is an error, which may be rectified thus:

Yet better thus *unknown* to be contemn'd.

When a man divests himself of his real character he feels no pain from contempt, because he supposes it incurred only by a voluntary disguise which he can throw off at pleasure. I do not think any correction necessary. JOHNSON.

The sentiment is this:—It is better to be thus contemn'd and know it, than to be flattered by those who secretly contemn us. HENLEY.

I cannot help thinking that this passage should be written thus:

Yet better thus *unknown* to be contemn'd,

Than still contemn'd and flatter'd to be worse.

The lowest, &c.

The quarto edition has no stop after *flatter'd*. The first folio, which has a comma there, has a colon at the end of the line.

The expression in this speech——*owes nothing to thy blasts*——(in a more learned writer) might seem to be copied from Virgil, *Æn.* xi. 51:

“*Nos juvenem exanimum, et nil jam cœlestibus ullis*

“*Debentem, vano mœsti comitamur bonore.* TYRWHITT.

I think with Mr. Tyrwhitt that Dr. Johnson's conjecture is well founded, and that the poet wrote—*unknown*. MALONE.

The meaning of Edgar's speech seems to be this. Yet it is better to be thus, in this fixed and acknowledged contemptible state, than, living in affluence, to be flattered and despised at the same time. He who is placed in the worst and lowest state, has this advantage; he lives in hope, and not in fear, of a reverse of fortune. The lamentable change is from affluence to beggary. He laughs at the idea of changing for the worse, who is already as low as possible. SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Enter GLOSTER, led by an old man.

My father, poorly led?—World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,⁴
Life would not yield to age.

Old Man. O my good lord, I have been your tenant, and
your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

Glo. Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone:
Thy comforts can do me no good at all,
Thee they may hurt.

Old Man. Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

Glo. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;
I stumbled when I saw: Full oft 'tis seen,
Our mean⁵ secures us; and our mere defects
Prove our commodities.—Ah, dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath!
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,⁶
I'd say, I had eyes again!

Old Man. How now? Who's there?

Edg. [aside.] O gods! Who is't can say, *I am at the
worst?*

I am worse than e'er I was.

Old Man. 'Tis poor mad Tom.

Edg.

⁴ The sense of this obscure passage is, O world! so much are human minds captivated with thy pleasures, that were it not for those successive miseries, each worse than the other, which overload the scenes of life, we should never be willing to submit to death, though the infirmities of old age would teach us to chuse it as a proper asylum. Besides, by uninterrupted prosperity, which leaves the mind at ease, the body would generally preserve such a state of vigour as to bear up long against the decays of time. These are the two reasons, I suppose, why he said,
Life would not yield to age.

And how much the pleasures of the body pervert the mind's judgement, and the perturbations of the mind disorder the body's frame, is known to all. *WARBURTON.*

O world! if reverses of fortune and changes such as I now see and feel, from ease and affluence to poverty and misery, did not show us the little value of life, we should never submit with any kind of resignation to the weight of years, and its necessary consequence, infirmity and death. *MALONE.*

⁵ *Mean* is here a substantive, and signifies a middle state, as Dr. Warburton rightly interprets it. *STEEVENS.*

⁶ So, in another scene, I see it feelingly. *STEEVENS.*

Edg. [*Aside.*] And worse I may be yet : The worst is not,

So long as we can say, *This is the worst.*⁷

Old Man. Fellow, where goest ?

Glo. Is it a beggar-man ?

Old Man. Madman and beggar too.

Glo. He has some reason, else he could not beg.

I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw ;

Which made me think a man a worm : My son

Came then into my mind ; and yet my mind

Was then scarce friends with him : I have heard more since :

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods ;

They kill us for their sport.

Edg. How should this be ?—

Bad is the trade must play the fool to sorrow,

Ang'ring itself and others. [*Aside.*]—Bless thee, master!

Glo. Is that the naked fellow ?

Old Man. Ay, my lord.

Glo. Then, pr'ythee, get thee gone : If, for my sake,

Thou wilt o'ertake us, hence a mile or twain,

I' the way to Dover, do it for ancient love ;

And bring some covering for this naked soul,

Whom I'll entreat to lead me.

Old Man. Alack, sir, he's mad.

Glo. 'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind :

Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure ;

Above the rest, be gone.

Old Man. I'll bring him the best 'parrel that I have,

Come on't what will.

[*Exit.*

Glo. Sirrah, naked fellow.

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold.—I cannot daub it⁸ further.

[*Aside.*

Clo.

⁷ While we live ; for while we yet continue to have a sense of feeling, something worse than the present may still happen. What occasioned this reflection was his rashly saying in the beginning of this scene,

“ ————— To be worst,

“ The lowest, and most dejected thing of fortune, &c.

“ The wretch, that thou hast blown unto the worst, &c.”

WARBURTON.

⁸ i. e. Disguise. WARBURTON.

Glo. Come hither, fellow.

Edg. [*Aside.*] And yet I must.—Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

Glo. Know'st thou the way to Dover?

Edg. Both stile and gate, horse-way, and foot-path. Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits: Bless the good man from the foul fiend! [Five fiends⁹ have been in poor Tom at once; of lust, as *Obidicut*; *Hobbididance*, prince of dumbness; *Mabu*, of stealing; *Modo*, of murder; and *Flibbertigibbet*, of mopping and mowing;² who since possesses chamber-maids and waiting-women.³ So, bless thee, master!]

Glo.

⁹ The rest of this speech is omitted in the folio. In *Harsnet's Book*, already quoted, p. 278, we have an extract from the account published by the exorcists themselves, viz. “By commaundement of the exorcist . . . the devil in Ma. Mainy confessed his name to be *Modu*, and that he had besides himself *seven other spirits*, and all of them captains, and of great fame.” “Then Edmundes (the exorcist) began againe with great earnestness, and all the company cried out, &c. . . . so as both that wicked prince *Modu* and his company, might be cast out.” This passage will account for *five fiends having been in poor Tom at once*. PERCY.

² “If she have a little helpe of the mother, epilepsie, or cramp, to teach her role her eyes, wrie her mouth, gnash her teeth, starte with her body, hold her armes and handes stiffe, make antike faces, grinne, *mow* and *mop* like an ape,—then no doubt—the *young girle* is owle-blasted and possessed.” *Harsnet's Declaration*, p. 136. MALONE.

³ Shakspeare has made Edgar, in his feigned distraction, frequently allude to a vile imposture of some English jesuits, at that time much the subject of conversation; the history of it having been just then composed with great art and vigour of stile and composition by Dr. S. Harsnet, afterwards archbishop of York, by order of the privy-council, in a work intituled, *A Declaration of egregious Popish Impostures to withdraw her Majesty's Subjects from their Allegiance, &c. practised by Edmunds, alias Weston, a Jesuit, and divers Romish Priests his wicked Associates*: printed 1603. The imposture was in substance this. While the Spaniards were preparing their armada against England, the jesuits were here busy at work to promote it, by making converts: one method they employed was to dispossess pretended demoniacs, by which artifice they made several hundred converts amongst the common people. The principal scene of this farce was laid in the family of one Mr. Edmund Peckham, a Roman-catholic, where Marwood, a servant of Antony Babington's (who was afterwards executed for treason) Trayford, an attendant upon Mr. Peckham, and Sarah and Friswood Williams, and Anne Smith, *three chamber-maids* in that family, came into the priest's hands for cure. But the discipline

Glo. Here, take this purse, thou whom the heaven's
plagues

Have humbled to all strokes : that I am wretched,
Makes thee the happier :—Heavens, deal so still!
Let the superfluous,⁴ and lust-dieted man,
That slaves your ordinance,⁵ that will not see
Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly ;
So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough.—Dost thou know Dover ?

Edg. Ay, master.

Glo. There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in ⁶ the confined deep :
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear,
With something rich about me : from that place
I shall no leading need.

Edg. Give me thy arm ;
Poor Tom shall lead thee.

[*Exeunt.*]

discipline of the patients was so long and severe, and the priest's so elate and careless with their success, that the plot was discovered on the confession of the parties concerned, and the contrivers of it deservedly punished. The five devils here mentioned, are the names of five of those who were made to act in this farce upon the *chamber-maids and waiting-women* ; and they were generally so ridiculously nick-named, that Harfnet has one chapter *on the strange names of their devils* ; *lest*, says he, *meeting them otherwise by chance, you mistake them for the names of tapsters or jugglers.* WARBURTON.

The passage in crotchets is omitted in the folio, because I suppose as the story was forgotten, the jest was lost. JOHNSON.

⁴ Lear has before uttered the same sentiment, which indeed cannot be too strongly impressed, though it may be too often repeated.

JOHNSON.

Superfluous is here used for one living in abundance. WARBURTON.

⁵ The language of Shakspeare is very licentious, and his words have often meanings remote from the proper and original use. To *slave* or *enslave* another is to *treat him with terms of indignity* : in a kindred sense, to *slave* the ordinance, may be, to *slight* or *ridicule* it. JOHNSON.

To *slave* an ordinance, is to treat it as a *slave*, to make it subject to us, instead of acting in obedience to it. STEEVENS.

⁶ Mr. Rowe and all the subsequent editors for *in read on*. I see no need of change. Shakspeare considered the sea as a *mirrour*. To look in a glass, is yet our colloquial phraseology. MALONE.

SCENE

SCENE II.

*Before the duke of Albany's Palace.**Enter GONERIL and EDMUND; Steward meeting them.*

Gen. Welcome, my lord: I marvel, our mild husband⁷
Not met us on the way:—Now, where's your master?

Stew. Madam, within; but never man so chang'd:
I told him of the army that was landed;
He smil'd at it: I told him, you were coming;
His answer was, *The worse*: of Gloster's treachery,
And of the loyal service of his son,
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot;
And told me, I had turn'd the wrong side out:—
What most he should dislike, seems pleasant to him;
What like, offensive.

Gen.

Then shall you go no further.

[*To EDMUND.*]

It is the cowardish terror of his spirit,
That dares not undertake: he'll not feel wrongs,
Which tie him to an answer: Our wishes, on the way,
May prove effects.⁸ Back, Edmund, to my brother;
Hasten his musters, and conduct his powers:
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us: ere long you are like to hear,
If you dare venture in your own behalf,

A mistresses

⁷ It must be remembered that Albany, the husband of Goneril, disliked, in the end of the first act, the scheme of oppression and ingratitude. JOHNSON.

⁸ I believe the meaning of the passage to be this: "What we wish, before our march is at an end, may be brought to happen," i. e. the murder or despatch of her husband.—*On the way*, however, may be equivalent to the expression we now use, viz. *By the way*, or *By the by*, i. e. *en passant*. STEEVENS.

The wishes we have formed and communicated to each other, on our journey, may be carried into effect. M. MASON.

She means, I think, The wishes, which we expressed to each other on our way hither, may be completed, and prove effectual to the destruction of my husband. MALONE.

A mistress's command. Wear this; spare speech;
[giving a favour.]

Decline your head: this kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air;—
Conceive and fare thee well.

Edm. Yours in the ranks of death.

Gon.

My most dear Gloucester!

[Exit EDMUND.]

O, the difference of man, and man! To thee
A woman's services are due; my fool
Usurps my bed.

Stew.

Madam, here comes my lord.

[Exit Steward.]

Enter ALBANY.

Gon. I have been worth the whistle.²

Alb.

O Goneril!

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face.—I fear your disposition:
That nature, which contemns its origin,
Cannot be border'd certain in itself;³
She that herself will fliver and disbranch⁴

From

¹ She bids him decline his head, that she might give him a kiss (the steward being present) and that it might appear only to him as a whisper.

STEEVENS.

² This expression is a reproach to Albany for having neglected her; though you disregard me thus, I have been worth the whistle, I have found one that thinks me worth calling. JOHNSON.

This expression is a proverbial one. Heywood in one of his dialogues, consisting entirely of proverbs, says:

“It is a poor dog that is not worth the whistling.”

Goneril's meaning seems to be—*There was a time when you would have thought me worth the calling to you*; reproaching him for not having summoned her to consult with on the present critical occasion. STEEVENS.

I think Mr. Steevens's interpretation the true one. MALONE.

³ The sense is, That nature which is arrived to such a pitch of unnatural degeneracy, as to condemn its origin, cannot from thenceforth be restrained within any certain bounds, but is prepared to break out into the most monstrous excesses every way, as occasion or temptation may offer.

HEATH.

⁴ To *fliver* signifies to tear off or disbranch. WARBURTON.

From her material sap,⁵ perforce must wither
And come to deadly use.⁶

Gon. No more; the text is foolish.

Alb. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile:
Filth's favour but themselves. What have you done?
Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?
A father, and a gracious aged man,
Whose reverence the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded.
Could my good brother suffer you to do it?
A man, a princè, by him so benefited?
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
'Twill come,
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
Like monsters of the deep.⁷

Gon. Milk-liver'd man!
That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honour from thy suffering; that not know'st,
Fools do those villains pity,⁸ who are punish'd
Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum?
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land;
With plumed helm thy slayer begins threats;
Whilst thou, a moral fool, sit'st still, and cry'st,
Alack! why does he so?

Alb. See thyself, devil!

Proper

⁵ She who breaks the bonds of filial duty, and becomes wholly alienated from her father, must wither and perish, like a branch separated from that *sap* which supplies it with nourishment, and gives life to the *matter* of which it is composed. MALONE.

⁶ Alluding to the *use* that witches and inchanters are said to make of *wither'd branches* in their charms. A fine insinuation in the speaker, that she was ready for the most unnatural mischief, and a preparative of the poet to her plotting with the bastard against her husband's life.

WARBURTON.

⁷ Fishes are the only animals that are known to prey upon their own species. JOHNSON.

⁸ She means, that *none but* fools would pity those villains, who are prevented from executing their malicious designs, and punished for their evil intention. It is not clear whether this fiend means her father, or the king of France. MALONE.

Proper deformity⁹ seems not in the fiend
So horrid, as in woman.

Gon. O vain fool!

Alb. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing,² for shame,
Be-monster not thy feature.³ Were it my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones:—Howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

Gon. Marry, your manhood now!—

Enter a Messenger.

Alb. What news?

Mes. O, my good lord, the duke of Cornwall's dead;
Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloster.

Alb. Gloster's eyes!

Mes. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Oppos'd against the act, bending his sword
To his great master; who, thereat enrag'd,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead:⁴
But not without that harmful stroke, which since
Hath pluck'd him after.

Alb. This shows you are above,
You

⁹ i. e. Diabolic qualities appear not so horrid in the devil to whom they belong, as in woman who unnaturally assumes them. WARBURTON.

² Of these lines there is but one copy, and the editors are forced upon conjecture. They have published this line thus:

Thou chang'd, and self converted thing;
but I cannot but think that by *self-cover'd* the author meant, thou that hast disguised nature by wickedness: thou that hast hid the woman under the fiend. JOHNSON.

The following words *bemonster not thy nature*, seem rather to support the reading of the former editors, which was *self-converted*. M. MASON.

By thou *self-cover'd* thing, the poet, I think, means, thou who hast put a covering on thyself, which nature did not give thee. The covering which Albany means, is, the semblance and appearance of a fiend.

MALONE.

³ Feature in Shakspeare's age meant the general cast of countenance, and often beauty. MALONE.

⁴ i. e. they (Cornwall and his other servants) amongst them fell'd him dead. MALONE.

You justicers,⁵ that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge!—But, O poor Gloster!
Lost he his other eye!

Mef. Both, both, my lord.—
'This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;
'Tis from your sister.

Gon. [*Aside.*] One way I like this well;⁶
But being widow, and my Gloster with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck
Upon my hateful life: Another way,
The news is not so tart. —I'll read, and answer. [*Exit.*

Alb. Where was his son, when they did take his eyes?

Mef. Come with my lady hither.

Alb. He is not here.

Mef. No, my good lord; I met him back again.

Alb. Knows he the wickedness?

Mef. Ay, my good lord; 'twas he inform'd against him;
And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment
Might have the freer course.

Alb. Gloster, I live
To thank thee for the love thou showd'st the king,
And to revenge thine eyes.—Come hither, friend;
Tell me what more thou knowest. [*Exeunt.*

[SCENE III.⁷

The French Camp, near Dover.

*Enter KENT, and a Gentleman.*⁸

Kent. Why the king of France is so suddenly gone back?
know you the reason? *Gent.*

⁵ Most of the old copies have *justices*; but it was certainly a misprint. The word *justicer* is used in two other places in this play; and though printed rightly in the folio, is corrupted in the quarto in the same manner as here. Some copies of quarto B read rightly—*justicers*, in the line before us. MALONE.

⁶ Goneril's plan was to poison her sister—to marry Edmund—to murder Albany—and to get possession of the whole kingdom. As the death of Cornwall facilitated the last part of her scheme, she was pleased at it; but disliked it, as it put it in the power of her sister to marry Edmund. M. MASON.

⁷ This scene, left out in all the common books, is restored from the old edition; it being manifestly of Shakspeare's writing, and necessary to continue

Gent. Something he left imperfect in the state,
Which since his coming forth is thought of; which
Imports to the kingdom so much fear and danger,
That his personal return was most requir'd,
And necessary.

Kent. Who hath he left behind him general?

Gent. The Mareschal of France, Monsieur le Fer.²

Kent. Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstration of grief?

Gent. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence;

And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek; it seem'd, she was a queen
Over her passion; who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it mov'd her.

Gent.

continue the story of Cordelia, whose behaviour is here most beautifully painted POPE.

The scene seems to have been left out only to shorten the play, and is necessary to continue the action. It is extant only in the quarto, being omitted in the first folio. I have therefore put it between crotchets.

JOHNSON.

⁸ The gentleman whom he sent in the foregoing act with letters to Cordelia. JOHNSON.

⁹ The king of France being no longer a necessary personage, it was fit that some pretext for getting rid of him should be formed, before the play was too near advanced towards a conclusion. Decency required that a Monarch should not be silently shuffled into the pack of insignificant characters; and therefore his dismissal (which could be effected only by a sudden recall to his own dominions) was to be accounted for before the audience. For this purpose, among others, the present scene was introduced. It is difficult indeed to say what use could have been made of the King, had he appeared at the head of his own armament, and survived the murder of his queen. His conjugal concern on the occasion, might have weakened the effect of Lear's parental sorrow; and, being an object of respect as well as pity, he would naturally have divided the spectator's attention, and thereby diminished the consequence of Albany, Edgar, and Kent, whose exemplary virtues deserved to be ultimately placed in the most conspicuous point of view. STEEVENS.

² Shakspeare seems to have been poor in the names of Frenchmen, or he would scarce have given us here a *Monsieur le Fer* as mareschal of France, after he had appropriated the same appellation to a common soldier, who was *fer'd*, *ferreted*, and *ferk'd*, by Pistol in *King Henry V.*

STEEVENS.

Gent. Not to a rage : patience and sorrow strove
 Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
 Sunshine and rain at once : her smiles and tears
 Were like a better day :³ Those happy smiles,
 That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
 What guests were in her eyes ; which parted thence,
 As pearls from diamonds dropp'd.⁴—In brief, sorrow

Would
³ It is plain, we should read—a *wetter May*, i. e. A spring season wetter than ordinary. **WARBURTON.**

The thought is taken from Sidney's *Arcadia*, p. 244. "Her tears came dropping down like rain in sunshine."

A *better day*, however, is the *best day*, and the *best day* is a day most favourable to the productions of the earth. Such are the days in which there is a due mixture of rain and sunshine. **STEEVENS.**

Doth not Dr. Warburton's alteration infer that Cordelia's sorrow was superior to her patience? But it seem'd that she was a queen over her passion ; and the smiles on her lip appeared not to know that tears were in her eyes. "Her smiles and tears were like a *better day*," or "like a *better May*," may signify that they were like such a season where sunshine prevailed over rain. **TOLLET.**

Both the quartos read—a *better way* ; which being perfectly unintelligible, I have adopted part of the emendation introduced by Dr. Warburton. The late editions have given—a *better day*, a reading which first appeared in a note of Mr. Theobald's. A *better day*, however it be understood, is, in my opinion, inconsistent with the context. If a *better day* means either a *good day*, or the *best day*, it cannot represent Cordelia's smiles and tears ; for neither the one nor the other necessarily implies *rain*, without which, there is nothing to correspond with her *tears* ; nor can a *rainy day*, occasionally brightened by sunshine, with any propriety be called a *good* or the *best day*. We are compelled therefore to make some other change.

A *better May*, on the other hand, whether we understand by it, a good May, or a May better than ordinary, corresponds exactly with the preceding image ; for in every May rain may be expected, and in a good, or a better May than ordinary, the sunshine, like Cordelia's smiles, will predominate. **MALONE.**

Mr. Malone reads—a *better May*.—As objections may be started against either reading, I declare my inability to decide between them. I have therefore left that word in the text which I found in possession of it.

STEEVENS.

⁴ The harshness of the foregoing line in the speech of the *Gentleman*, induces me to believe that our author might have written :

"Like pearls from diamonds drop-ping."

The idea might have been taken from the ornaments of the ancient carcanet or necklace, which frequently consisted of table *diamonds* with *pearls* appended to them, or, in the jeweller's phrase, *dropping* from them. Pendants for the ears are still called—*drops*. **STEEVENS.**

Would be a rarity most belov'd, if all
Could so become it.

Kent. Made she no verbal question?⁵

Gent. 'Faith, once, or twice, she heav'd the name of
father

Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;
Cry'd, *Sisters! sisters!—Shame of ladies! sisters!*

Kent! father! sisters! What? i' the storm? i' the night?

*Let pity not be believed!*⁶—There she shook

The holy water from her heavenly eyes,

And clamour moisten'd:⁷ then away she started

To deal with grief alone.

Kent. It is the stars,

The stars above us, govern our conditions;⁸

Else one self mate and mate⁹ could not beget

Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

Gent. No.

Kent. Was this before the king return'd?

Gent.

No, since.

Kent. Well, sir; The poor distress'd Lear is i' the town:

Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers

What we are come about, and by no means

Will yield to see his daughter.

Gent.

Why, good sir?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him: his own unkind-
ness,

That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her

To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights

To

⁵ Means only, did she enter into no conversation with you? In this sense our poet frequently uses the word *question*, and not simply as the act of interrogation. Did she give you to understand her meaning *by words* as well as by the foregoing external testimonies of sorrow? STEEVENS.

⁶ i. e. Let not such a thing as pity be supposed to exist! STEEVENS.

⁷ It is not impossible but Shakspeare might have formed this fine picture of Cordelia's agony from holy writ, in the conduct of Joseph; who, being no longer able to restrain the vehemence of his affection, commanded all his retinue from his presence; and then *weped aloud*, and discovered himself to his brethren. THEOBALD.

That is, *her out-cries were accompanied with tears.* JOHNSON.

⁸ i. e. regulate our dispositions. MALONE.

⁹ The same husband and the same wife. JOHNSON.

To his dog-hearted daughters,—these things sting
His mind so venomously, that burning shame²
Detains him from Cordelia.

Gent. Alack, poor gentleman!

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not?

Gent. 'Tis so; they are afoot.³

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear,
And leave you to attend him: some dear cause⁴
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go
Along with me.]

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

The same. A Tent.

Enter CORDELIA, Physician, and Soldiers.

Cor. Alack, 'tis he; why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea: singing aloud;
Crown'd with rank fumiter, and furrow weeds,
With harlocks,⁵ hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel,⁶ and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn.—A century fend forth;
Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye. [*Exit an Officer.*—What can
man's wisdom do,
In the restoring his bereaved sense?

He,

² The metaphor is here preserved with great knowledge of nature. The *venom* of poisonous animals being a high caustick salt, that has all the effect of *fire* upon the part. *WARBURTON.*

³ Dr. Warburton thinks it necessary to read, *'tis said*; but the sense is plain, So it is that *they are on foot*. *JOHNSON.*

⁴ Some important business. *MALONE.*

⁵ The quartos read—*bardocks*; the folio—*bardokes*.

I do not remember any such plant as a *bardock*, but one of the most common weeds is a *burdock*, which I believe should be read here; and so Hanmer reads. *JOHNSON.*

Hardocks should be *barlocks*. *FARMER.*

One of the readings offer'd by the quartos (though mis-spelt) is perhaps the true one. The *boar-dock*, is the dock with whitish woolly leaves. *STEEVENS.*

⁶ According to Gerard, is the most hurtful of weeds among corn.

STEEVENS.

He, that helps him, take all my outward worth.

Phy. There is means, madam:
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,
Are many simples operative, whose power
Will close the eye of anguish.

Cor. All blest'd secrets,
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant, and remediate,
In the good man's distress!—Seek, seek for him;
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it.⁷

Enter a Messenger.

Mes. Madam, news;
The British powers are marching hitherward.

Cor. 'Tis known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them.—O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning, and important⁸ tears, hath pitied.
No blown⁹ ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our ag'd father's right:
Soon may I hear, and see him! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

A Room in Gloster's Castle.

Enter REGAN and Steward.

Reg. But are my brother's powers set forth?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Reg. Himself

In person there?

Stew. Madam, with much ado:
Your sister is the better foldier.

Reg. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?

Stew. No, madam.

Reg.

⁷ The reason which should guide it. JOHNSON.

⁸ In other places of this author for *importunate*. JOHNSON.

⁹ No inflated, no swelling pride. JOHNSON.

Reg. What might import my sister's letters to him?

Stew. I know not, lady.

Reg. 'Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter. It was great ignorance, Gloucester eyes being out, To let him live; where he arrives, he moves All hearts against us: Edmund, I think, is gone, In pity of his misery, to despatch His nighted life;² moreover, to descry The strength o' the enemy.

Stew. I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

Reg. Our troops set forth to-morrow; stay with us; The ways are dangerous.

Stew. I may not, madam?

My lady charg'd my duty in this business.

Reg. Why should she write to Edmund? Might not you Transport her purposes by word? Belike, Something—I know not what:—I'll love thee much, Let me unseal the letter.³

Stew. Madam, I had rather—

Reg. I know, your lady does not love her husband; I am sure of that: and, at her late being here, She gave strange œiliads,⁴ and most speaking looks To noble Edmund: I know you are of her bosom.

Stew. I, madam?

Reg. I speak in understanding; you are, I know it: Therefore, I do advise you, take this note:⁵ My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd; And more convenient is he for my hand, Than for your lady's:—You may gather more.⁶ If you do find him, pray you, give him this:⁷

And

² i. e. His life made dark as night, by the extinction of his eyes.

STEEVENS.

³ I know not well why Shakspeare gives the steward, who is a mere factor of wickedness, so much fidelity. He now refuses the letter; and afterwards, when he is dying, thinks only how it may be safely delivered.

JOHNSON.

⁴ *Oellade*, Fr. a cast, or significant glance of the eye. STEEVENS.

⁵ *Note* means in this place not a letter, but a remark. Therefore observe what I am saying. JOHNSON.

⁶ You may infer more than I have directly told you. JOHNSON.

⁷ I suppose Regan here delivers a ring or some other favour to the Steward, to be conveyed to Edmund. MALONE.

And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.
So, fare you well.

If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Stew. 'Would I could meet him, madam! I would show
What party⁸ I do follow.

Reg. Fare thee well. [Exeunt.

SCENE VI.⁹

The Country near Dover.

Enter GLOSTER and EDGAR, dress'd like a Peasant.

Glo. When shall we come to the top of that same hill?

Edg. You do climb up it now: look, how we labour.

Glo. Methinks, the ground is even.

Edg. Horrible steep:

Hark, do you hear the sea?

Glo. No, truly.²

Edg. Why, then your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.

Glo. So may it be, indeed:
Methinks, thy voice is alter'd;³ and thou speak'st
In better phrase, and matter, than thou didst.

Edg. You are much deceiv'd; in nothing am I chang'd,
But in my garments.

Glo. Methinks, you are better spoken.

Edg. Come on, sir; here's the place:—stand still.—How
fearful

And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!⁴ The

⁸ Quarto, *What lady.* JOHNSON.

⁹ This scene, and the stratagem by which Gloster is cured of his desperation, are wholly borrowed from Sidney's *Arcadia*, Book II.

JOHNSON.

² Somewhat, necessary to complete the measure, is omitted in this or the foregoing hemistich. Sir Thomas Hanmer supplies the defect, though perhaps but awkwardly, by reading—

No truly, *not.* STEEVENS.

³ Edgar alters his voice in order to pass afterwards for a malignant spirit. JOHNSON.

⁴ This description has been much admired since the time of Addison, who

The crows, and choughs, that wing the midway air,
 Show scarce so gross as beetles: Half way down
 Hangs one that gathers samphire;⁵ dreadful trade!
 Methinks, he seems no bigger than his head:
 The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
 Appear like mice; and yon' tall anchoring bark,
 Diminish'd to her cock;⁶ her cock, a buoy
 Almost too small for fight: The murmuring surge,
 That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
 Cannot be heard so high:—I'll look no more;
 Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
 Topple⁷ down headlong.

Glo. Set me where you stand.

Edg. Give me your hand: You are now within a foot
 Of

who has remarked, with a poor attempt at pleasantry, that "he who can read it without being giddy, has a very good head, or a very bad one." The description is certainly not mean, but I am far from thinking it wrought to the utmost excellence of poetry. He that looks from a precipice finds himself assailed by one great and dreadful image of irresistible destruction. But this overwhelming idea is dissipated and enfeebled from the instant that the mind can restore itself to the observation of particulars, and diffuse its attention to distinct objects. The enumeration of the choughs and crows, the samphire-man, and the fishers, counteracts the great effect of the prospect, as it peoples the desert of intermediate vacuity, and stops the mind in the rapidity of its descent through emptiness and horror. JOHNSON.

It is to be considered that Edgar is describing an imaginary precipice, and is not therefore supposed to be so strongly impressed with the dreadful prospect of inevitable destruction, as a person would be who really found himself on the brink of one. M. MASON.

⁵ "Samphire grows in great plenty on most of the sea-cliffs in this country: it is terrible to see how people gather it, hanging by a rope several fathom from the top of the impending rocks as it were in the air." Smith's *History of Waterford*, p. 315, edit. 1774. TOLLET.

This personage is not a mere creature of Shakspeare's imagination, for the gathering of samphire was literally a *trade* or common occupation in his time, it being carried and cried about the streets, and much used as a pickle. So in Venner's *Via recta*, &c. 4to. 1622: "Samphire is in like manner preserved in pickle, and eaten with meates. It is a very pleasant and familiar sauce, and agreeing with man's body." MALONE.

⁶ Her cock-boat. JOHNSON.

Hence the term *cockswain*, a petty officer in a ship. STEEVENS.

⁷ To *topple* is to *tumble*. The word has been already used in *Macbeth*.

Of the extreme verge : for all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.⁸

Clo. Let go my hand.

Here, friend, is another purse ; in it, a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking : Fairies, and gods,
Prosper it with thee ! Go thou further off ;
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

Edg. Now fare you well, good sir. [*Seems to go.*]

Glo. With all my heart.

Edg. Why I do trifle thus with his despair,
Is done to cure it.

Glo. O you mighty gods !

This world I do renounce ; and, in your sights,
Shake patiently my great affliction off :
If I could bear it longer, and not fall
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,
My snuff, and loathed part of nature, should

⁸ But what danger is in leaping *upwards* or *downwards*? He who leaps thus must needs fall again on his feet upon the place from whence he rose. We should read :

Would I not leap *outright* ;
i. e. forward : and then being on the verge of a precipice he must needs fall headlong. WARBURTON.

I doubt whether the word—*outright*, was even in use at the time when this play was written.

Upright, with the strict definition—"perpendicularly erect," is absurd ; for such a leap is *physically* impossible. *Upright* is barely expletive : "*upwards*,"—"from the ground." FARMER.

One of the senses of the word *upright* in Shakspeare's time, was that in which it is now used. So, in *The tempest* :

"—time goes *upright* with his carriage."

And with this signification, I have no doubt it was used here. Every man who leaps, in his first effort to raise himself from the ground, *springs upright*. Far from thinking of leaping *forward*, for which, being certain destruction, nothing could compensate, Edgar says, he would not for all beneath the moon run the risk of even leaping *upwards*.

Dr. Warburton idly objects, that he who leaps upwards, must needs fall again on his feet upon the same place from whence he rose. If the commentator had tried such a leap *within a foot* of the edge of a precipice, before he undertook the revision of these plays, the world would, I fear, have been deprived of his labours.

Upright in our author's time, meant also *supinus*. See Minshew's Dict. 1617. "*Upright*, or on the back, with the face upward." But this sense is here inadmissible. MALONE.

Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, blefs him!—
Now, fellow, fare thee well. [*He leaps, and falls along.*]

Edg. Gone, fir? farewell.—

And yet I know not how conceit may rob
'The treasury of life, when life itself
Yields to the theft: ⁹ Had he been where he thought,
By this, had thought been past.—Alive, or dead?
Ho, you fir! friend!—Hear you, fir?—speak!
Thus might he pass indeed: ²—Yet he revives:
What are you, fir?

Glo. Away, and let me die.

Edg. Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, ³ feathers, air,
So many fathom down precipitating,
Thou hadst shiver'd like an egg: but thou dost breathe;
Hast heavy substance; bleed'st not; speak'st; art sound.
Ten masts at each ⁴ make not the altitude,
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell;
Thy life's a miracle: Speak yet again,

Glo. But have I fallen, or no?

Edg. From the dread summit of this chalky bourn: ⁵
Look up a height;—the shrill gorg'd lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up.

Glo.

⁹ When life is willing to be destroyed. JOHNSON.

² Thus might he *die* in reality. We still use the word *passing-bell*.

JOHNSON.

³ *Gossimere*, the white and cobweb-like exhalations that fly about in hot sunny weather. Skinner says, in a book called *The French Gardiner*, it signifies the down of the sow-thistle, which is driven to and fro by the wind. GREY.

The substance called Gossamer is formed of the collected webs of flying spiders, and during calm weather in Autumn sometimes falls in amazing quantities. HOLT WHITE.

⁴ i. e. each, at, or near, the other. Such I suppose the meaning, if the text be right; but it is probably corrupt. The word *attach'd* (as read by Mr. Pope) certainly existed in Shakspeare's time, but was not used in the sense required here. In Bullokar's *English Expositor*, 8vo. 1616, to *attach* is interpreted, "To take, lay hold on." It was *verbum juris*. MALONE.

⁵ *Bourn* seems here to signify a *bill*. Its common signification is a *brook*. Milton in *Comus* uses *brisk bourn*, in the same sense perhaps with Shakspeare. But in both authors it may mean only a *boundary*.

JOHNSON.

Here it certainly means "this chalky boundary of England, towards France." STEEVENS.

Glo. Alack, I have no eyes.—
Is wretchedness depriv'd that benefit,
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,
And frustrate his proud will.

Edg. Give me your arm:
Up:—So;—How is't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

Glo. Too well, too well.

Edg. This is above all strangeness.
Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you?

Glo. A poor unfortunate beggar.

Edg. As I stood here below, methought, his eyes
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd,⁶ and wav'd like the enridged sea;⁷
It was some fiend: Therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods,⁸ who make them honours
Of men's impossibilities,⁹ have preserv'd thee.

Glo. I do remember now: henceforth I'll bear
Affliction, till it do cry out itself,
Enough, enough, and, die. That thing you speak of,
I took it for a man; often 'twould say,
The fiend, the fiend: he led me to that place.

Edg. Bear free and patient thoughts.²—But who comes
here?

Enter

⁶ *Whelk'd*, I believe, signifies *varied with protuberances*. STEEVENS.
Twisted, convolved. A welk or whilk is a small shell-fish.

MALONE.

⁷ Thus the 4to. The folio *enraged*. STEEVENS.

Enridged was certainly our author's word; for he has the same expression in his *Venus and Adonis*. MALONE.

⁸ The purest; the most free from evil. JOHNSON.

⁹ Who are graciously pleased to preserve men in situations in which they think it impossible to escape: Or, perhaps, who derive honour from being able to do what man can not do. MALONE.

By *men's impossibilities* perhaps is meant, what men call impossibilities, what appear as such to mere mortal beings. STEEVENS.

² To be melancholy is to have the mind *chained down* to one painful idea; there is therefore great propriety in exhorting Gloucester to *free thoughts*, to an emancipation of his soul from grief and despair.

JOHNSON.

Enter LEAR, fantastically dressed up with flowers.
The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.³

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coining;
I am the king himself.

Edg. O thou side-piercing sight!

Lear. Nature's above art in that respect.—There's your
press-money.⁴ That fellow handles his bow like a crow-
keeper:⁵ draw me a clothier's yard.—Look, look, a
mouse!

³ I read:

*The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.*

“Here is Lear, but he must be mad: his sound or *sane* senses would
never suffer him to be thus disguised.” JOHNSON.

I have no doubt but that *safer* was the poet's word. STEEVENS.

⁴ It is evident from the whole of this speech, that Lear fancies him-
self in a battle: but, *There's your press-money* has not been properly ex-
plained. It means the money which was paid to soldiers when they were
retained in the King's service; and it appears from some ancient statutes,
and particularly 7 Henry VII. c. 1. and 3 Henry VIII. c. 5. that it was
felony in any soldier to withdraw himself from the King's service after
receipt of this money, without special leave. On the contrary, he was
obliged at all times to hold himself in readiness. The term is from the
French “*prest*,” *ready*. It is written *prest* in several places in *King
Henry V. His Book of household expences* still preserved in the Exche-
quer. This may serve also to explain the following passage in Act V. sc.
ii. “And turn our *imprest* lances in our eyes;” and to correct Mr.
Whalley's note in *Hamlet*, Act I. sc. i. —“Why such *imprest* of ship-
wrights!” DOUCE.

⁵ Mr. Pope in his last edition reads *crow-keeper*. It is certain we must
read *crow-keeper*. In several counties to this day, they call a stuffed
figure, representing a man, and armed with a bow and arrow, set up to
fright the crows from the fruit and corn, a *crow-keeper*, as well as a *scare-
crow*. THEOBALD.

This *crow-keeper* was so common in the author's time, that it is one of
the few peculiarities mentioned by Ortelius in his account of our island.
JOHNSON.

“And when corn's sown, or grown into the ear,
Practice thy quiver and turn *crow-keeper*.”

Mr. Tollet informs me, that Markham in his *Farewell to Husbandry*,
says, that such servants are called field-keepers, or *crow-keepers*.

STEEVENS.

The following curious passage in Latimer's *Fruitful Sermons*, 1584. fol.
66. will show how indispensable was practice to enable an archer to
handle

mouse! Peace, peace;—this piece of toasted cheese will do't.—There's my gruntlet; I'll prove it on a giant.—Bring up the brown bills.⁶—O, well flown, bird!—i' the clout,⁷ i' the clout: hewgh!—Give the word.⁸

Edg. Sweet marjoram.

Lear. Pass.

Glo. I know that voice.

Lear. Ha! Goneril!—with a white beard!⁹—They flatter'd me like a dog;² and told me, I had white hairs in my beard, ere the black ones were there.³ To say *ay*, and *no*, to every thing I said!—*Ay* and *no* too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet⁴ me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found them, there I smelt them out. Go to,

handle his bow skilfully. “In my time (says the good bishop) my poor father was diligent to teach me to shoote, as to learne me any other thing, and so I thinke other men did their children. He taught me how to draw, howe to lay my body in my bow, and not to drawe with strength of armes as other nations doe, but with strength of the bodye. I had my bowes bought me according to my age and strength: as I increased in them, so my bowes were made bigger and bigger: for men shall neuer shoote well, except they be brought up in it.” HOLT WHITE.

⁶ A *bill* was a kind of battle-axe, affixed to a long staff.

STEEVENS.

⁷ Lear is here raving of *archery*, and shooting at *buts*, as is plain by the words *i' the clout*, that is, the *white* mark they set up and aim at: hence the phrase, to *hit the white*. WARBURTON.

Mr. Heath thinks there can be no impropriety in calling an arrow a *bird*, from the swiftness of its flight, especially when immediately preceded by the words *well-flown*: but it appears that *well-flown bird*, was the falconer's expression when the hawk was successful in her flight; and is so used in *A Woman kill'd with Kindness*. STEEVENS.

The quartos read—O, well flown bird in the ayre, hugh, give the word. MALONE.

⁸ Lear supposes himself in a garrison, and before he lets Edgar pass, requires the watch-word. JOHNSON.

⁹ So reads the folio, properly; the quarto, whom the latter editors have followed, has, *Ha! Goneril, ha! Regan! they flattered me, &c.* which is not so forcible. JOHNSON.

² They played the spaniel to me. JOHNSON.

³ They told me that I had the wisdom of age, before I had attained to manhood. MALONE.

⁴ This seems to be an allusion to king Canute's behaviour when his courtiers flattered him as lord of the sea. STEEVENS.

to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was every thing; 'tis a lie; I am not ague-proof.

Glo. The trick⁵ of that voice I do well remember: Is't not the king?

Lear. Ay, every inch a king:
When I do stare, see, how the subject quakes.
I pardon that man's life: What was thy cause?—
Adultery.—

Thou shalt not die: Die for adultery! No:
The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.
Let copulation thrive, for Gloster's bastard son
Was kinder to his father, than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.
To't, luxury,⁶ pell-mell, for I lack soldiers.
Behold yon' simpering dame,
Whose face between her forks⁷ presageth snow;
That minces virtue,⁸ and does shake the head
To hear of pleasure's name;
The fitchew,⁹ nor the soiled horse,² goes to't
With a more riotous appetite.

Down

⁵ *Trick* (says Sir Thomas Hanmer) is a word frequently used for the air, or that peculiarity in a face, voice, or gesture, which distinguishes it from others. We still say “—he has a trick of winking with his eyes, of speaking loud,” &c. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Luxury* was the ancient appropriate term for incontinence. STEEVENS.
⁷ The construction is not “whose face between her forks,” &c. but “whose face presageth snow between her forks.” EDWARDS.

To preserve the modesty of Mr. Edwards's happy explanation, I can only hint a reference to the words *fourcheure* in Cotgrave's *Dictionary*. STEEVENS.

⁸ Whose virtue consists in appearance only; in an affected delicacy and prudery: who is as nice and squeamish in talking of virtue and of the frailer part of her sex, as a lady who walks *mincingly* along. MALONE.

This is a passage which I shall not venture to explain further than by recommending a reconsideration of the passage, quoted by Mr. Malone, from *The Merchant of Venice*. STEEVENS.

⁹ A polecat. POPE.

² *Soiled horse* is a term used for a horse that has been fed with hay and corn in the stable during the winter, and is turned out in the spring to take the first flush of grass, or has it cut and carried in to him. This at once cleanses the animal, and fills him with blood. STEEVENS.

Down from the waist they are centaurs,
 Though women all above:
 But to the girdle do the gods inherit,³
 Beneath is all the fiends';⁴ there's hell, there's darkness,
 there is the sulphurous pit, burning, scalding, stench, con-
 sumption;—Fie, fie, fie! pah; pah! Give me an ounce of
 civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination: there's
 money for thee.

Glo. O, let me kiss that hand!

Lear. Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

Glo. O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world
 Shall so wear out to nought.—Dost thou know me?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou
 squiny at me?⁵ No, do thy worst, blind Cupid; I'll not
 love.—Read thou this challenge; mark but the penning of
 it.

Glo. Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

Edg. I would not take this from report;—it is,
 And my heart breaks at it.

Lear. Read.

Glo. What, with the case of eyes?⁶

Lear. O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your
 head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy
 case, your purse in a light: Yet you see how this world
 goes.

Glo. I see it feelingly.

Lear. What, art mad? A man may see how this world
 goes, with no eyes. Look with thine ears: see how yon'
 justice rails upon yon' simple thief. Hark, in thine ear:
 Change

³ To *inherit* in Shakspeare is, to possess. But is here used for only.

MALONE.

⁴ According to Grecian superstition, every limb of us was consigned to
 the charge of some particular deity. COLLINS.

In the old copies the preceding as well as the latter part of Lear's
 speech is printed as prose. I doubt much whether any part of it was
 intended for metre. MALONE.

⁵ To *squiny* is to look askint. MALONE.

⁶ The *case of eyes* is the *socket* of either eye. STEEVENS.

This could not have been the author's word; for "this *case of eyes*"
 in the language of his time signified—*this pair of eyes*, a sense directly op-
 posite to that intended to be conveyed. MALONE.

Change places ; and, handy-dandy,⁷ which is the justice, which is the thief ?—Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar ?

Glo. Ay, sir.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur ? There thou might'st behold the great image of authority : a dogs obey'd in office.—

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand :

Why dost thou lash that whore ? Strip thine own back ;

Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind

For which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear ;

Robes, and furr'd gowns, hide all.⁸ Plate sin with gold,

And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks :

Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.

None does offend, none, I say, none ; I'll able 'em :⁹

Take that of me, my friend, who have the power

To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes ;

And, like a scurvy politician, seem

To see the things thou dost not.—Now, now, now, now :

Pull off my boots :—harder, harder ; so.

Edg. O, matter and impertinency mix'd !

Reason in madness !

Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.

I know thee well enough ; thy name is Gloucester :

Thou must be patient ; we came crying hither.

Thou

⁷ The words *change places*, *and*, are not in the quartos. *Handy-dandy* is, I believe, a play among children, in which something is shaken between two hands, and then a guess is made in which hand it is retained. See Florio's Italian Dict. 1598 : "*Bazzicchiare*. To shake between two hands ; to play *bandy-dandy*." Coles in his Latin Dict, 1679, renders "to play handy-dandy," by *digitis micare* ; and he is followed by Ainsworth ; but they appear to have been mistaken ; as is Dr. Johnson in his definition in his Dictionary, which seems to have been formed on the passage before us, misunderstood. He says, *Handy-dandy* is "a play in which children *change hands and places*." MALONE.

⁸ From *bide all* to *accuser's lips*, the whole passage is wanting in the first edition, being added, I suppose, at his revival. JOHNSON.

⁹ An old phrase signifying to qualify, or uphold them.

Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,
We wawl, and cry :—I will preach to thee ; mark me.

Glo. Alack, alack the day !

Lear. When we are born, we cry, that we are come
To this great stage of fools ;— This a good block ?²
It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe
A troop of horse with felt ;³ I'll put it in proof ;
And when I have stolen upon these sons-in-law,
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill.⁴

Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants.

Gent. O, here he is ; lay hand upon him.—Sir,
Your most dear daughter—

Lear. No rescue ? What, a prisoner ? I am even
The natural fool of fortune.—Use me well ;
You shall have ransom. Let me have a surgeon,
I am cut to the brains.

Gent. You shall have any thing.

Lear. No seconds ? All myself ?

Why,

² ——— [*This a good block ?*] Perhaps, we should read—

'Tis a good block. RITSON.

Upon the king's saying, *I will preach to thee*, the poet seems to have meant him to pull off his *bat*, and keep turning it and feeling it, in the attitude of one of the preachers of those times, (whom I have seen so represented in ancient prints,) till the idea of *felt*, which the good *bat* of *block* was made of, raises the stratagem in his brain of shoeing a troop of horse with a substance soft as that which he held and moulded between his hands. This makes him start from his preachment.—*Block* anciently signified the *bead part* of the hat, or *the thing on which a bat is formed*, and sometimes the hat itself.—See *Much Ado about Nothing* : “ He weares his faith but as the fashion of his *bat* ; it changes with the next *block*.” STEEVENS.

³ i. e. with flocks kneaded to a mass, a practice I believe sometimes used in former ages, for it is mentioned in *Ariosto*. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare however might have adopted the stratagem of shoeing a troop of horse with *felt*, from the following passage in Fenton's *Tragicall Discourses*, 4to. b. l. 1567 : “ ———he attyreth himselfe for the purpose in a night-gowne girt to hym, with a paire of *shoes of felte*, leaste the noyse of his feete shoulde discover his goinge.” P. 58. STEEVENS.

This “ delicate stratagem ” had actually been put in practice about fifty years before Shakspeare was born, as we learn from Lord Herbert's *Life of Henry the Eighth*, p. 41. MALONE.

⁴ This was formerly the word given in the English army, when an onset was made on the enemy. MALONE.

Why, this would make a man, a man of salt,⁵
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
Ay, and for laying autumn's dust.

Gent.

Good fir,—

Lear. I will die bravely, like a bridegroom : What ?
I will be jovial ; come, come ; I am a king,
My masters, know you that ?

Gent. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

Lear. Then there's life in it.⁶ Nay, an you get it, you
shall get it by running. Sa, fa, fa, fa.

[*Exit, running; Attendants follow.*]

Gent. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch ;
Past speaking of in a king !—Thou hast one daughter,
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

Edg. Hail, gentle fir.

Gent.

Sir, speed you : What's your will ?

Edg. Do you hear aught, fir, of a battle toward ?

Gent. Most sure, and vulgar : every one hears that,
Which can distinguish sound.

Edg.

But, by your favour,

How near's the other army ?

Gent. Near, and on speedy foot ; the main descry
Stands on the hourly thought.⁷

Edg.

I thank you, fir : that's all.

Gent. Though that the queen on special cause is here,
Her army is mov'd on.

Edg.

I thank you, fir.

[*Exit Gent.*]

Glo. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me ;
Let not my worser spirit⁸ tempt me again
To die before you please !

Edg.

Well pray you, father.

Glo. Now, good fir, what are you ?

Edg. A most poor man, made tame by fortune's blows ;

Who,

⁵ *A man of salt is a man of tears.* MALONE.

⁶ The case is not yet desperate. JOHNSON.

⁷ The main body is expected to be descry'd every hour. The expression is harsh. JOHNSON.

⁸ By this expression may be meant—*my evil genius.* STEEVENS.

Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,⁹
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,
I'll lead you to some biding.

Glo. Hearty thanks :
The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot !

Enter Steward.

Stew. A proclaim'd prize ! Most happy !
That eyeless head of thine was first fram'd flesh
To raise my fortunes.—Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember :²—The sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Glo. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to it. [*EDGAR opposes.*]

Stew. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Dar'st thou support a publish'd traitor ? Hence ;
Lest that the infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

Edg. Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion.

Stew. Let go, slave, or thou die'st.

Edg. Good gentleman, go your gait,³ and let poor volk
pass. And ch'ud ha' been zwagger'd out of my life, 'twould
not ha' been zo long as 'tis by a vortnight. Nay, come not
near the old man ; keep out, che vor'ye,⁴ or ise try whether
your costard⁵ or my bat⁶ be the harder : Ch'll be plain
with you.

Stew. Out, dunghill !

Edg.

⁹ i. e. Sorrows past and present. *WARBURTON.*

I doubt whether *feeling* is not used, with our poet's usual licence, for *felt*. Sorrows known, not by relation, but by experience. *MALONE.*

² i. e. Quickly recollect the past offences of thy life, and recommend thyself to heaven. *WARBURTON.*

³ *Gang your gait* is a common expression in the North. In the last rebellion, when the Scotch soldiers had finished their exercise, instead of our term of dismissal, their phrase was, *gang your gaits*. *STEEVENS.*

⁴ Edgar counterfeits the western dialect. *JOHNSON.*

When our ancient writers have occasion to introduce a rustick, they commonly allot him this Somersetshire dialect. *STEEVENS.*

⁵ *Costard*. i. e. head. *STEEVENS.*

⁶ i. e. club. *STEEVENS.*

Rather in this place a *staff*. In Suffex a walking-stick is called a *bat*. *Bats* and *clubs* are distinguished in *Coriolanus*. *HOLT WHITE.*

Edg. Ch'ill pick your teeth, zir : Come ; no matter vor your foins.⁷ [*They fight ; and EDGAR knocks him down.*]

Stew. Slave, thou hast slain me :—Villain, take my purse ;

If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body ;
And give the letters, which thou find'st about me,
To Edmund earl of Gloster ;⁸ seek him out
Upon the British party :—O, untimely death ! [*Dies.*]

Edg. I know thee well : A serviceable villain ;
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress,
As badness would desire.

Glo. What, is he dead ?

Edg. Sit you down, father ; rest you.—
Let's see his pockets : these letters, that he speaks of,
May be my friends.—He's dead ; I am only sorry
He had no other death's-man.—Let us see :—
Leave, gentle wax ; and, manners, blame us not :
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts ;
Their papers, is more lawful.⁹

[*reads.*] *Let our reciprocal vows be remember'd. You have many opportunities to cut him off: if your will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered. There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror: Then am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol; from the loath'd warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labour.*

Your wife, (so I would say,) and your affectionate servant,

Goneril

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will!²—

A plot

⁷ To *foin*, is to make what we call a *thrust* in fencing. Shakspeare often uses the word. STEEVENS.

⁸ Mr. Smith has endeavoured, without any success, to prove in a long note, that we ought to read—*letter* both here and below, because the Steward had only one letter in his pocket, namely that written by Goneril, But there is no need of change, for *letters* formerly was used like *epistolæ* in Latin, when one only was intended. MALONE.

⁹ This is darkly expressed: the meaning is, Our enemies are put upon the rack, and torn in pieces to extort confession of their secrets; to tear open their letters is more lawful. WARBURTON.

² I believe, the plain meaning is—O undistinguishing licentiousness of a woman's inclinations! STEEVENS.

A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;
 And the exchange, my brother!—Here in the sands,
 Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified³
 Of murderous lechers: and, in the mature time,
 With this ungracious paper strike the sight
 Of the death-practis'd duke: ⁴ For him 'tis well,
 That of thy death and business I can tell.

[Exit EDGAR, dragging out the body.]

Glo. The king is mad: How stiff is my vile sense,
 That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling⁵
 Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract;
 So should my thoughts be severed from my griefs;
 And woes, by wrong imaginations, lose
 The knowledge of themselves.

Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Give me your hand:
 Far, off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum.
 Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VII.

A Tent in the French camp. LEAR on a bed, asleep; Phy-
 sician, Gentleman,⁶ and Others, attending: Enter COR-
 DELIA and KENT.

Cor. O thou good Kent, how shall I live, and work,
 To

³ I'll cover thee. In Staffordshire, to rake the fire, is to cover it with fuel for the night. JOHNSON.

The epithet, *unsanctified*, refers to his want of burial in consecrated ground. STEEVENS.

⁴ The duke of Albany, whose death is machinated by *practice* or treason. JOHNSON.

⁵ *Ingenious feeling* signifies a feeling from an understanding not disturbed or disordered, but which, representing things as they are, makes the sense of pain the more exquisite. WARBURTON.

⁶ In the quartos the direction is, "Enter CORDELIA, KENT, and Doctor," omitting by negligence the *Gentleman*, who yet in those copies is a speaker in the course of the scene, and remains with KENT, when the rest go out. In the folio, the direction is, "Enter CORDELIA, KENT, and *Gentleman*;" to the latter of whom all the speeches are given, which in the original copies are divided between the *physician* and the *gentleman*. I suppose, from a penury of actors, it was found convenient to unite the two characters, which, we see, were originally distinct. Cor-

To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me.⁷

Kent. To be acknowledg'd, madam, is o'erpay'd.
All my reports go with the modest truth;
Nor more, nor clipp'd, but so.

Cor. Be better suited:⁸
These weeds are memories of those worser hours;⁹
I pr'ythee, put them off.

Kent. Pardon me, dear madam;
Yet to be known, shortens my made intent:²
My boon I make it, that you know me not,
Till time and I think meet.

Cor. Then be it so, my good lord.—How does the king?
[to the Physician.

Phys. Madam, sleeps still.

Cor. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
The untun'd and jarring senses, O, wind up
Of this child-changed father!³

Phys. So please your majesty,
That we may wake the king? he hath slept long.

Cor.

Cordelia's words, however, might have taught the editor of the folio to have given the *gentleman* whom he retained the appellation of *Doctor*:

“Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed

“I' the sway of your own will.” MALONE.

⁷ All good which I shall allot thee, or measure out to thee, will be scanty. JOHNSON.

⁸ Be better dress'd, put on a better suit of clothes. STEEVENS.

⁹ *Memories*, i. e. Memorials, remembrancers. STEEVENS.

² There is a dissonancy of terms in *made intent*; one implying the idea of a thing done, the other, undone. I suppose Shakspeare wrote—*laid intent*, i. e. projected. WARBURTON.

An *intent made*, is an *intent formed*. So we say in common language, to *make a design*, and to *make a resolution*. JOHNSON.

³ i. e. Changed to a child by his years and wrongs; or perhaps, reduced to this condition by his children. STEEVENS.

Lear is become insane, and this is the change referred to. Infanity is not the property of second childhood, but dotage. HENLEY.

Changed by his children; a father, whose jarring senses have been un-
uned by the monstrous ingratitude of his daughters. So, *care-craz'd*,
trazed by care; *wave-worn*, worn by the waves; *woe-wearied*, harassed
cy woe; &c. MALONE.

Cor. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd?

Gent. Ay, madam; ⁴ in the heaviness of his sleep,
We put fresh garments on him.

Phys. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;
I doubt not of his temperance.

Cor. Very well.

Phys. Please you, draw near.—Louder the musick there.⁵

Cor. O my dear father! Restoration, hang
Thy medicine on my lips; ⁶ and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms, that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

Kent. Kind and dear princess!

Cor. Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face
To be expos'd against the warring winds?
[To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch (poor perdu!)
With this thin helm? ⁷] Mine enemy's dog,

Though

⁴ The folio gives these four lines to a *Gentleman*. One of the quartos gives the two first to the *Doctor*, and the two next to *Kent*. The other quarto appropriates the two first to the *Doctor*, and the two following ones to a *Gentleman*. I have given the two first, which best belong to an attendant, to the *Gentleman* in waiting, and the other two to the *Physician*, on account of the caution contained in them, which is more suitable to his profession. STEEVENS.

In the folio the *Gentleman* and (as he is here called) the *Physician*, is one and the same person. RITSON.

⁵ Shakspeare considered *soft musick* as favourable to sleep. Lear, we may suppose, had been thus compos'd to rest; and now the *Physician* desires *louder musick* to be played, for the purpose of waking him.

MALONE.

⁶ This is fine. She invokes the goddess of health, Hygeia, under the name of *Restoration*, to make her the minister of her rites, in this holy office of recovering her father's lost senses. WARBURTON.

Restoration is no more than *recovery* personified. STEEVENS.

⁷ With this thin covering of air. MALONE.

The allusion is to the forlorn-hope in an army, which are put upon desperate adventures, and called in French *enfants perdus*. These *enfants perdus* being always slightly and badly armed, is the reason that she adds With this thin helm? i. e. bare-headed. WARBURTON.

Dr.

Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire; And wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!

'Tis wonder, that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.⁸—He wakes; speak to him.

Phys. Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?

Lear. You do me wrong, to take me out o' the grave:—
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know; When did you die?

Cor. Still, still, far wide!

Phys. He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I;—Fair day-
light?—

I am mightily abus'd.⁹—I should even die with pity,
To see another thus.—I know not what to say.—

I will not swear, these are my hands:—let's see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur'd
Of my condition.

Cor. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:—

No,

Dr. Warburton's explanation of the word *perdu* is just, though the latter part of his assertion has not the least foundation. Paulus Jovius, speaking of the body of men who were anciently sent on this desperate adventure, says, "*Hos ab immoderata fortitudine perditos vocant, et in summo honore atque admiratione habent.*" It is not likely that those who deserved so well of their country for exposing themselves to certain danger, should be sent out, *summa admiratione*, and yet slightly and badly armed. STEEVENS.

In Bacon's *Apology*, touching the late Earl of Essex, 12mo. 1651, p. 105: "—you have put me like one of those that the Frenchmen call *Enfans perdus* that serve on foot before horsemen." REED.

Amongst other desperate services in which the forlorn hope, or *enfants perdus*, were engaged, the night-watches seem to have been a common one. WHALLEY.

⁸ It is wonder that thy wits and life had not all ended. JOHNSON.

⁹ I am strangely imposed on by appearances; I am in a strange mist of uncertainty. JOHNSON.

No, sir, you must not kneel.³

Lear. Pray, do not mock me :

I am a very foolish fond old man,
 Fourscore and upward ;⁴ and, to deal plainly,
 I fear, I am not in my perfect mind.
 Methinks, I should know you, and know this man !
 Yet I am doubtful : for I am mainly ignorant
 What place this is ; and all the skill I have
 Remembers not these garments ; nor I know not
 Where I did lodge last night : Do not laugh at me ;
 For, as I am a man, I think this lady
 To be my child Cordelia.

Cor. And so I am, I am.

Lear. Be your tears wet ? Yes, 'faith. I pray, weep not :
 If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
 I know, you do not love me ; for your sisters
 Have, as I do remember, done me wrong :
 You have some cause, they have not.

Cor. No cause, no cause.

Lear. Am I in France ?

Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.

Lear. Do not abuse me.

Phys. Be comforted, good madam : the great rage,
 You see, is cur'd in him : [and yet it is danger
 To make him even o'er the time he has lost⁵]
 Desire him to go in ; trouble him no more, Till

³ This circumstance I find in the old play on the same subject, apparently written by another hand, and published before any edition of Shakspeare's tragedy had made its appearance. As it is always difficult to say whether such accidental resemblances proceed from imitation, or a similarity of thinking on the same occasion, I can only point out this to the reader, to whose determination I leave the question. STEEVENS.

⁴ The folio reads—*not an hour more less*.

The words *not an hour more or less*, are judiciously reprobated by Mr. Steevens as the interpolation of some foolish player. We should therefore read :

Fourscore and upward ; and, to deal plainly *with you*. RITSON.

⁵ i. e. To reconcile it to his apprehension. WARBURTON.

I believe, Dr. Warburton's explanation is just. The poor old king had nothing to tell, though he had much to hear. The speaker's meaning therefore I conceive to be—it is dangerous to render all that passed during the interval of his insanity, *even* (i. e. plain or level,) to his understanding, while it continues in its present state of uncertainty. STEEVENS.

Till further settling.

Cor. Will't please your highness walk?

Lear. You must bear with me:

Pray now, forget and forgive: I am old, and foolish.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, CORDELLIA, Physician, and Attendants.]

[*Gent.* Holds it true, sir,⁶

That the duke of Cornwall was so slain:

Kent. Most certain, sir.

Gent. Who is conductor of his people?

Kent. As 'tis said,

The bastard son of Gloster.

Gent. They say, Edgar

His banish'd son, is with the earl of Kent

In Germany.

Kent. Report is changeable.

'Tis time to look about; the powers o' the kingdom
Approach apace.

Gent. The arbitrement is like to be a bloody.

Fare you well, sir.

[*Exit.*

Kent. My point and period will be thoroughly wrought,
Or well, or ill, as this day's battle's fought.]

[*Exit.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

The Camp of the British Forces near Dover.

*Enter, with drums and colours, EDMUND, REGAN, Officers,
Soldiers, and Others.*

Edm. Know of the duke, if his last purpose hold;
Or, whether since he is advis'd by aught
To change the course: He's full of alteration,

And

⁶ What is printed in crotchets is not in the folio. It is at least proper if not necessary; and was omitted by the author, I suppose, for no other reason than to shorten the representation. JOHNSON.

It is much more probable, that it was omitted by the players, after the author's departure from the stage, without consulting him. His plays have been long exhibited with similar omissions, which render them often perfectly unintelligible. The loss however is little felt by the greater part of the audience, who are intent upon other matters.

And self-reproving :—bring his constant pleasure.⁷

[To an Officer, who goes out.

Reg. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

Edm. 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

Reg.

Now, sweet lord,

You know the goodness I intend upon you :

Tell me,—but truly,—but then speak the truth,

Do you not love my sister ?

Edm.

In honour'd love.

[Reg. But have you never⁸ found my brother's way
To the forefended place ?⁹

Edm.

That thought abuses you.¹

Reg. I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

Edm. No, by mine honour, madam.]

Reg. I never shall endure her : Dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edm.

Fear me not :—

She, and the duke her husband,—

Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, and Soldiers.

Gon. I had rather lose the battle, than that sister
Should loosen him and me.

[*Aside.*

Alb. Our very loving sister, well be met.—

Sir, this I hear, The king is come to his daughter,
With others, whom the rigour of our state
Forc'd to cry out. [Where I could not be honest,

⁷ His settled resolution. JOHNSON.

⁸ The *first* and *last* of these speeches, printed within crotchets, are inserted in Sir Thomas Hanmer's, Theobald's, and Dr. Warburton's editions ; the two intermediate ones, which were omitted in all others, I have restored from the old quartos, 1608. Whether they were left out through negligence, or because the imagery contained in them might be thought too luxuriant, I cannot determine ; but sure a material injury is done to the character of the Bastard by the omission ; for he is made to deny that flatly at first, which the poet only meant to make him evade, or return slight answers to, till he is urged so far as to be obliged to shelter himself under an immediate falsehood. Query, however, whether Shakspeare meant us to believe that Edmund had actually found his way to the forefended place ? STEEVENS.

⁹ Forefended means prohibited, forbidden. STEEVENS.

¹ That thought imposes on you ; you are deceived. MALONE.

I never yet was valiant : for this business,
It toucheth us as France invades our land,
Not holds the king; with others, whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.³

Edm. Sir, you speak nobly.⁴]

Reg.

Why is this reason'd?

Gon. Combine together 'gainst the enemy :
For these domestick and particular broils
Are not to question here.

Alb.

Let us then determine
With the ancient of war on our proceedings.

Edm. I shall attend you presently at your tent.

Reg. Sister, you'll go with us?

Gon. No.

Reg. 'Tis most convenient ; pray you, go with us.

Gon. O, ho, I know the riddle : [*Aside.*] I will go.

As they are going out, enter EDGAR disguised.

Edg. If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,
Hear me one word.

Alb.

I'll overtake you.—Speak.

[*Exeunt EDM. REG. GON. Officers, Soldiers, and Attendants.*]

Edg. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it : wretched though I seem,
I can produce a champion, that will prove
What is avouched there : If you miscarry,
Your business of the world hath so an end,

'And

³ The meaning is, The king, and others whom we have opposed are come to Cordelia. I could never be valiant but in a just quarrel. We must distinguish ; it is just in one sense and unjust in another. As France invades our land I am concerned to repel him ; but as he holds, entertains, and supports the king, and others whom I fear many just and heavy causes make, or compel, as it were to oppose us, I esteem it unjust to engage against them. This speech, thus interpreted according to the common reading, is likewise very necessary : for otherwise Albany who is characterised as a man of honour and observer of justice, gives no reason for going to war with those, whom he owns had been much injured under the countenance of his power. WARBURTON.

⁴ This reply must be understood ironically MALONE.

And machination ceases.⁵ Fortune love you!

Alb. Stay till I have read the letter.

Edg. I was forbid it.

When time shall serve, let but the herald cry

And I'll appear again. [Exit.]

Alb. Why, fare thee well; I will o'erlook thy paper.

Re-enter EDMUND.

Edm. The enemy's in view, draw up your powers.
Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
By diligent discovery;—but your haste
Is now urg'd on you.

Alb. We will greet the time.⁶ [Exit.]

Edm. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,
If both remain alive: To take the widow,
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;
And hardly shall I carry out my fide.⁷
Her husband being alive. Now then, we'll use
His countenance for the battle; which being done,
Let her, who would be rid of him, devise
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
Which he intends to Lear, and to Cordelia,—
The battle done, and they within our power,
Shall never see his pardon: for my state

Stands

⁵ All designs against your life will have an end. STEEVENS.

⁶ We will be ready to meet the occasion. JOHNSON.

⁷ Bring my purpose to a successful issue, to completion. *Side* seems here to have the sense of the French word *prendre parti*, to take his resolution. JOHNSON.

“I shall scarcely be able to make out my game.” The allusion is to a party at cards, and he is afraid that he shall not be able to make his fide successful. M. MASON.

Edmund, I think, means, hardly shall I be able to make my party good; to maintain my cause. We should now say—to bear out, which Coles in his Dict. 1679, interprets, to make good, to save harmless.

Side for *party* was the common language of the time. MALONE.

Stands on me to defend, not to debate.⁸ [Exit.

S C E N E II.

A Field between the two Camps.

Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colours, LEAR, CORDELIA, and their forces; and exeunt.

Enter EDGAR and GLOSTER.

Edg. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
For your good host; pray that the right may thrive:
If ever I return to you again,
I'll bring you comfort.

Glo. Grace go with you, fir!

[Exit EDGAR.

Alarums; afterwards a Retreat. Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Away, old man, give me thy hand, away;
King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en!
Give me thy hand, come on.

Glo. No further, fir; a man may rot even here.

Edg. What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
Ripeness is all:⁹ Come on.

Glo. And that's true too.

[Exeunt.

S C E N E III.

The British Camp near Dover.

Enter, in conquest, with drum and colours, EDMUND; LEAR and CORDELIA, as prisoners; Officers, Soldiers, &c.

Edm. Some officers take them away: good guard
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.²

Cor. We are not the first,
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.³

For

⁸ I do not think that *for* stands in this place as a word of inference or causality. The meaning is rather: Such is my determination concerning Lear; as for my state it requires now, not deliberation, but defence and support. JOHNSON.

⁹ To be ready, prepared, is all. STEEVENS.

² i. e. to pass sentence or judgement on them. STEEVENS.

For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.—
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: So we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,—
Who loses, and who wins; who's in, who's out;—
And take upon us the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies:⁴ And we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects⁵ of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.

Edm. Take them away

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense.⁶ Have I caught thee?⁷
He, that parts us, shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence like foxes.⁸ Wipe thine eyes;

The

³ i. e. the worst that fortune can inflict. MALONE.

⁴ As if we were angels commissioned to survey and report the lives of men, and were consequently endowed with the power of prying into the original motives of action and the mysteries of conduct. JOHNSON.

⁵ Packs is used for combinations or collections, as is a pack of cards. For sects, I think sets might be more commodiously read. So We say, affairs are now managed by a new set. Sects, however, may well stand.

JOHNSON.

⁶ The thought is extremely noble and expressed in a sublime of imagery that Seneca fell short of on the like occasion. "Ecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat intentus operi suo deus: ecce par deo dignum, vir fortis cum malâ fortuna compositus." WARBURTON.

⁷ *Have I caught my heavenly jewel*, is a line of one of Sir Philip Sidney's songs, which Shakspeare has put into Falstaff's mouth in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. MALONE.

⁸ I have been informed that it is usual to smoke foxes out of their holes.

STEEVENS.

Mr. Upton is of opinion that "the allusion is to the scriptural account of Sampson's tying foxes, two and two together by the tail, and fastening a fire-brand to the cord; then letting them loose among the standing corn of the Philistines. Judges, xv. 4."

The

The goujeers⁹ shall devour them, flesh and fell,²
Ere they shall make us weep : we'll see them starve first.

Come. [Exeunt LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded.]

Edm. Come hither, captain ; hark.

Take thou this note ;³ [giving a paper.] go, follow them
to prison :

One step I have advanc'd thee ; if thou dost
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes : Know thou this,—that men
Are as the time is : to be tender-minded
Does not become a sword :—Thy great employment
Will not bear question ;⁴ either say thou'lt do't,
Or thrive by other means.

Off. I'll do't, my lord.

Edm. About it ; and write happy, when thou hast done,
Mark,—I say, instantly ; and carry it so,
As I have set it down.

Off.

The words—shall bring a *brand from heaven*, seem to favour Mr. Upton's conjecture. If it be right, the construction must be, they shall bring a brand from heaven, and, like foxes, fire us hence : referring foxes, not to Lear and Cordelia, but to those who should separate them.

MALONE.

The *brands* employed by Sampson were not brought from heaven. I therefore prefer the common and more obvious explanation of the passage before us. STEEVENS.

⁹ The *goujeres*, i. e. *Morbus Gallicus*. *Gouge*, Fr. signifies one of the common women attending a camp : and as that disease was first dispersed over Europe by the French army, and the women who followed it, the first name it obtained among us was the *gougeries*, i. e. the disease of the *gouges*. HANMER.

The resolute John Florio has sadly mistaken these *goujeres*. He writes “With a good yeare to thee !” and gives it in Italian, “*Il mal' anno che dio ti dia.*” FARMER.

² Flesh and skin. JOHNSON.

³ This was a warrant, signed by the Bastard and Goneril, for the execution of Lear and Cordelia. MALONE.

⁴ By *great employment* was meant the *commission* given him for the murder ; and this the Bastard tells us afterwards, was signed by Goneril and himself. Which was sufficient to make this captain *unaccountable* for the execution. WARBURTON.

The important business which is now entrusted to your management, does not admit of *debate* : you must instantly resolve to do it, or not. *Question*, here, as in many other places, signifies *discourse*, *conversation*.

Off. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;
If it be man's work, I will do it. [*Exit Officer.*]

Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, Officers,
and Attendants.

Alb. Sir, you have shewn to-day your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well: You have the captives
Who were the opposites of this day's strife:
We do require them of you; so to use them,
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

Edm. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention and appointed guard:
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side,
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes;
Which do command them. With him I sent the queen;
My reason all the same; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, to appear
Where you shall hold your session. [At this time,⁶
We sweat, and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend;
And the best quarrels, in the heat, are curs'd
By those that feel their sharpness:—
The question of Cordelia, and her father,
Requires a fitter place.⁷]

Alb. Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.

Reg. That's as we list to grace him.
Methinks, our pleasure might have been demanded,
Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers; Bor

⁵ i. e. Turn the *launcemen* whom we have hired by giving them *press*-money against us.

Impress, however, in this place, may possibly have its common signification. STEEVENS.

⁶ This passage, well worthy of restoration, is omitted in the folio.

⁷ i. e. The determination of the question what shall be done with Cordelia and her father, should be reserved for greater privacy.

STEEVENS.

Bore the commission of ⁸ my place and person ;
The which immediacy ⁹ may well stand up,
And call itself your brother.

Gon. Not so hot :
In his own grace ² he doth exalt himself,
More than in your advancement.

Reg. In my rights,
By me invested, he compeers the best.

Gon. That were the most, if he should husband you.³

Reg. Jesters do oft prove prophets,

Gon. Holla, Holla !

That eye, that told you so, look'd but a-squint.⁴

Reg. Lady, I am not well ; else I should answer
From a full-flowing stomach.—General,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony ;
Dispose of them, of me ; the walls are thine : ⁵
Witness the world, that I create thee here
My lord and master.

Gon. Mean you to enjoy him ?

Alb. The let-alone lies not in your good will. ⁶

Edm.

⁸ *Commission*, for authority. WARBURTON.

⁹ *Immediacy* is *supremacy* in opposition to *subordination*, which has *quiddam medium* between itself and power. JOHNSON.

Immediacy here implies proximity without intervention ; in rank, of such a plenary delegation of authority, as to constitute the person on whom it is conferred, *another SELF* : *alter et idem*. HENLEY.

Immediacy is, I think, close and immediate connexion with me, and direct authority from me, without, to use Dr. Johnson's words, *quiddam medium*. MALONE.

² *Grace* here means *accomplishments*, or *honours*. STEEVENS.

³ If he were married to you, you could not say more than this, nor could he enjoy greater power. MALONE.

⁴ Alluding to the proverb : " Love being jealous makes a good eye look *asquint*." STEEVENS.

⁵ A metaphorical phrase taken from the camp, and signifying, *to surrender at discretion*. WARBURTON.

⁶ Whether he shall not or shall, depends not on your choice.

JOHNSON.

Albany means to tell his wife, that, however she might want the power, she evidently did not want the inclination to prevent the match.

RITSON

To *obstruct* their union lies not in your good pleasure : your *veto* will avail nothing. MALONE.

Edm. Nor in thine, lord.

Alb. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Reg. Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.

[*To EDMUND.*]

Alb. Stay yet; hear reason:—Edmund I arrest thee
On capital treason; and, in thine arrest,
This gilded serpent: [*pointing to GON.*—for your claim,
fair sister,

I bar it in the interest of my wife;

'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,

And I, her husband, contradict your bans.

If you will marry, make your love to me,

My lady is bespoke.

Gon. An interlude!⁷

Alb. Thou art arm'd, Gloster:—Let the trumpet sound:

If none appear to prove upon thy person,

Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,

There is my pledge; [*throwing down a glove.*] I'll prove it
on thy heart,

Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less

Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

Reg. Sick, O, sick!

Gon. If not, I'll ne'er trust poison.

[*Aside.*]

Edm. There's my exchange; [*throwing down a glove.*]
what in the world he is

That names me traitor, villain-like he lies:

Call by thy trumpet; he that dares approach,

On him, on you, (who not?) I will maintain

My truth and honour firmly.

Alb. A herald, ho!

Edm. A herald, ho, a herald!

Alb. Trust to thy single virtue;⁸ for thy soldiers,

All levied in my name, have in my name

Took their discharge.

Reg. This sickness grows upon me.

Enter

⁷ This short exclamation of Goneril is added in the folio edition, I suppose, only to break the speech of Albany, that the exhibition on the stage might be more distinct and intelligible. JOHNSON.

⁸ i. e. valour; a Roman sense of the word. STEEVENS.

Enter a Herald.

Alb. She is not well ; convey her to my tent.

[Exit REGAN, led.]

Come hither, herald,—Let the trumpet sound,—
And read out this.

Off. Sound, trumpet.

[A trumpet sounds.]

Herald reads.

If any man of quality, or degree, within the lists of the army, will maintain upon Edmund, supposed earl of Gloster, that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear at the third sound of the trumpet : He is bold in his defence.

Edm. Sound.

[1. trumpet.]

Her. Again.

[2. trumpet.]

Her. Again.

[3. trumpet.]

[Trumpet answers within.]

Enter EDGAR, armed, preceded by a Trumpet.

Alb. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o' the trumpet.

Her.

What are you ?

Your name, your quality ? and why you answer
This present summons ?

Edg.

Know, my name is lost ;

By treason's tooth bare-gnawn, and canker-bit :

Yet am I noble, as the adversary

I come to cope withal.

Alb.

Which is that adversary ?

Edg. What's he, that speaks for Edmund earl of Gloster ?

Edm. Himself ;—What say'st thou to him ?

Edg.

Draw thy sword ;

That, if my speech offend a noble heart,

Thy arm may do thee justice : here is mine. ⁹

Behold,

⁹ Here I draw my sword. Behold, it is the privilege or right of my profession to draw it against a traitor. I protest therefore, &c.

It is not the charge itself (as Dr. Warburton has erroneously stated,) but the right of bringing the charge and maintaining it with his sword, which Edgar calls the privilege of his profession. MALONE.

Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,
 My oath, and my profession: ² I protest,—
 Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,
 Despite thy victor sword, and fire new fortune,
 Thy valour, and thy heart,—thou art a traitor:
 False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;
 Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince;
 And, from the extremest upward of thy head,
 To the descent and dust beneath thy feet,
 A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou, *No*.
 This sword, this arm, and my best spirits are bent
 To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
 Thou liest.

Edm. In wisdom, I should ask thy name; ³
 But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
 And that thy tongue some say ⁴ of breeding breathes,
 What safe and nicely I might well delay ⁵
 By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn:
 Back do I toss these treasons to thy head;
 With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart?
 Which, (for they yet glance by, and scarcely bruise,)

This

² The charge he is going to bring against the Bastard, he calls *the privilege*, &c. To understand which phraseology, we must consider that the old rights of knighthood are here alluded to; whose oath and profession required him to discover all treasons, and whose privilege it was to have his challenge accepted, or otherwise to have his charge taken *pro confesso*. For if one who was no knight accused another who was, that other was under no obligation to accept the challenge. On this account it was necessary, as Edgar came disguised, to tell the Bastard he was a knight. *WARBURTON*.

The *privilege* of this *oath* means the privilege gained by taking the oath administered in the regular initiation of a knight professed. *JOHNSON*.

³ Because, if his adversary was not of equal rank, Edmund might have declined the combat. Hence the herald proclaimed—"If any man of quality, or degree," &c. *MALONE*.

⁴ *Say*, for *essay*, some show or probability. *POPE*.

Say is sample, a taste. To take the *assise* was the technical term.

STEEVENS.

⁵ The phraseology is here very licentious. I suppose the meaning is, That delay which by the laws of knighthood I might make, I scorn to make. *Nicely* is, punctiliously; if I stood on minute forms.

MALONE.

This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest for ever.⁶ — Trumpets, speak.

[*Alarums. They fight. EDMUND falls.*]

Alb. O save him, save him!

Gon. This is mere practice, Gloucester.⁷
By the law of arms, thou wast not bound to answer
An unknown opposite; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguil'd.

Alb. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it:—Hold, sir:
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil:—
No tearing, lady; I perceive you know it.

[*Gives the letter to Edmund.*]

Gon. Say, if I do; the laws are mine, not thine:
Who shall arraign me for't?

Alb. Most monstrous?
Know'st thou this paper?

Gon. Ask me not what I know.

[*Exit GONERIL.*]

Alb. Go after her: she's desperate; govern her.

[*To an Officer, who goes out.*]

Edm. What you have charg'd me with, that have I done;
And more, much more: the time will bring it out;
'Tis past, and so am I: But what art thou,
That hast this fortune on me? If thou art noble,
do forgive thee.

Edg. Let's exchange charity⁸.

I am

⁶ To that place, where they shall rest for ever; i. e. thy heart.

MALONE.

⁷ Thus all the copies, but I have ventured to place the two hemistichs to Goneril. 'Tis absurd that Albany, who knew Edmund's treasons, and his own wife's passion for him, should be solicitous to have his life saved. THEOBALD.

Albany desires that Edmund's life might be spared at present, only to obtain his confession, and to convict him openly by his own letter.

JOHNSON.

⁸ Our author by negligence gives his heathens the sentiments and practises of christianity. In *Hamlet* there is the same solemn act of final reconciliation, but with exact propriety, for the personages are Christians:

“Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet,” &c.

JOHNSON.

am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;
 If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.
 My name is Edgar, and thy father's son,
 The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
 Make instruments to scourge us:
 The dark and vicious place where thee he got,
 Cost him his eyes.

Edm. Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true;
 The wheel is come full circle; I am here.

Alb. Methought, thy very gait did prophecy
 A royal nobleness:—I must embrace thee;
 Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
 Did hate thee, or thy father!

Edg. Worthy prince,
 I know it well.

Alb. Where have you hid yourself?
 How have you known the miseries of your father?

Edg. By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;—
 And, when 'tis told, O, that my heart would burst!—
 The bloody proclamation to escape,
 That follow'd me so near, (O, our lives' sweetness!
 That with the pain of death we'd hourly die,
 Rather than die at once!) taught me to shift
 Into a madman's rags: to assume a semblance
 That very dogs disdain'd: and in this habit
 Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
 Their precious stones new lost; became his guide,
 Led him, begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair;
 Never (O fault!) reveal'd myself unto him,
 Until some half hour past, when I was arm'd,
 Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
 I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
 Told him my pilgrimage: But his flaw'd heart,
 (Alack, too weak the conflict to support!)
 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
 Burst smilingly.

Edm. This speech of yours hath mov'd me,
 And shall, perchance, do good: but speak you on;
 You look as you had something more to say.

Alb. If there be more, more woful, hold it in.

For I am almost ready to dissolve,
Hearing of this.

[*Edg.*⁸ This would have seem'd a period
To such as love not sorrow; but another,
To amplify too-much, would make much more,
And top extremity.⁹

Whilst I was big in clamour, came there a man,
Who having seen me in my worst estate,
Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding
Who 'twas that so endur'd, with his strong arms
He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out
As he'd burst heaven; threw him on my father;
Told the most piteous tale of Lear and of him,
That ever ear receiv'd: which in recounting,
His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
Began to crack: Twice then the trumpet sounded,
And there I left him tranc'd.

Alb. But who was this?

Edg. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in disguise
Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service
Improper for a slave.]

Enter a Gentleman hastily, with a bloody knife.

Gent. Help! help! O help!

Edg. What kind of help?

Alb. Speak, man.

Edg. What means that bloody knife?

Gent. 'Tis hot, it smokes;
It

⁸ The lines between crotchets are not in the folio.

⁹ The reader easily sees that this reflection refers to the Bastard's desiring to hear more; and to Albany's thinking he had said enough. But it is corrupted into miserable nonsense. We should read it thus:

This would have seem'd a period. But such

As love to amplify another's sorrow,

To much, would make much more, and top extremity.

i. e. This to a common humanity would have been thought the utmost of my sufferings; but such as love cruelty are always for adding more to much, till they reach the extremity of misery. WARBURTON.

The sense may probably be this. *This would have seemed a period to such as love not sorrow; but—another, i. e. but I must add another, i. e. another period, another kind of conclusion to my story, such as will increase the horrors of what has been already told.* STEEVENS.

It came even from the heart of—

Alb. Who, man, speak.

Gent. Your lady, fir, your lady: and her filler
By her is poison'd; she confesses it.

Edm. I was contracted to them both; all three
Now marry in an instant.

Alb. Produce their bodies, be they alive or dead?—
This judgment ² of the heavens, that makes us tremble,
Touches us not with pity. [Exit Gent.]

Enter KENT.

Edg. Here comes Kent, fir.³

Alb. O! it is he,
The time will not allow the compliment
Which very manners urges.

Kent. I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night;
Is he not here?

Alb. Great thing of us forgot!
Speak, Edmund, where's the king? and where's Cordelia?—
See'st thou this object, Kent?

[The bodies of GONERIL and REGAN are brought in.]

Kent. Alack, why thus?

Edm. Yet Edmund was belov'd:
The one the other poison'd for my fake,
And after flew herself.

Alb. Even so.—Cover their faces.

Edm. I pant for life: Some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,—
Be brief in it,—to the castle; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear, and on Cordelia:—
Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run, O, run—

Edg. To who, my lord?—Who has the office? send
Thy token of reprieve.

Edm.

² If Shakspeare had studied Aristotle all his life, he would not perhaps have been able to mark with more precision the distinct operations of *terror* and *pity*. TYRWHITT.

³ The manner in which Edgar here mentions Kent, seems to require the lines which are inserted from the first edition in the foregoing scene.
JOHNSON.

Edm. Well thought on; take my sword,
Give it the captain.

Alb. Haste thee, for thy life. [*Exit EDGAR.*]

Edm. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid + herself.

Alb. The gods defend her! Bear him hence awhile.

[*EDMUND is borne off.*]

*Enter LEAR with CORDELIA dead in his arms; 5 EDGAR,
Officer, and Others.*

Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl!—O, you are men of
stones;

Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack:—O, she is gone for
ever!—

I know when one is dead, and when one lives.
She's dead as earth:—Lead me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promis'd end?

Edg. Or image of that horror? ⁶

Alb.

⁴ To *fordo*, signifies to *destroy*. STEEVENS.

⁵ This princess, according to the old historians, retired with victory from the battle which she conducted in her father's cause, and thereby replaced him on the throne: but in a subsequent one fought against her (after the death of the old king) by the sons of Goneril and Regan, she was taken, and died miserably in prison. The poet found this in history, and was therefore willing to precipitate her death, which he knew had happened but a few years after. The dramatick writers of this age suffered as small a number of their heroes and heroines to escape as possible; nor could the filial piety of this lady, any more than the innocence of Ophelia, prevail on Shakspeare to extend her life beyond her misfortunes.

STEEVENS.

Geoffrey of Monmouth, the original relater of this story, says, that Cordelia was thrown by her Nephews into prison, "where, for grief at the loss of her kingdom, she killed herself." MALONE.

⁶ It appears to me that by the *promised end* Kent does not mean that conclusion which the state of their affairs seemed to promise, but the end of the world. In St. Mark's Gospel, when Christ foretels to his disciples the end of the world, and is describing to them the signs that were to precede,

Alb. Fall, and cease! ⁷

Lear. This feather stirs: ⁸ she lives! it it be so,
It is a chance that does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. O my good master! [kneeling.

Lear. Pr'ythee, away.

Edg.

precede, and mark the approach of, our final dissolution, he says, "For in those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the Creation which God created, unto this time, neither shall be:" and afterwards he says, "Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death." Kent in contemplating the unexampled scene of exquisite affliction which was then before him, and the unnatural attempt of Goneril and Regan against their father's life, recollects these passages, and asks, whether that was the end of the world that had been foretold to us. To which Edgar adds, or only a representation or resemblance of that horror?

So Macbeth, when he calls upon Banquo, Malcolm, &c. to view Duncan murdered, says,

"—up, up, and see

"The great doom's image!"

There is evidently an allusion to the same passages in Scripture, in a speech of Gloucester's which he makes in the second scene of the first act:

"These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us;—love cools; friendship falls off; brothers divide; in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces treason; and the bond crack'd 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father; the king falls from the bias of nature; there's father against child: We have seen the best of our time."

If any criticks should urge it as an objection to this explanation, that the persons of the drama are pagans, and of consequence unacquainted with the scriptures, they give Shakspeare credit for more accuracy than I fear he possessed. M. MASON.

This note deserves the highest praise, and is inserted in the present work with the utmost degree of gratitude to its author. STEEVENS.

I entirely agree with Mr. Mason in his happy explanation of this passage. In a speech which our poet has put into the mouth of young Clifford in *The Second Part of King Henry VI.* a similar imagery is found.

MALONE.

⁷ Albany is looking with attention on the pains employed by Lear to recover his child, and knows to what miseries he must survive, when he finds them to be ineffectual. Having these images present to his eyes and imagination, he cries out *Rather fall, and cease to be, at once than continue in existence only to be wretched.* STEEVENS.

⁸ A common experiment of applying a light feather to the lips of a person supposed to be dead, to see whether he breathes, WHALLEY.

Edg. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

Lear. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have sav'd her; now she's gone for ever!—
Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little. Ha!

What is't thou say'st—Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low; an excellent thing in woman:
I kill'd the slave that was a hanging thee.

Off. 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

Lear. Did I not, fellow?
I have seen the day, with my good biting faulchion
I would have made them skip:⁹ I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me.—Who are you?
Mine eyes are none o' the best:—I'll tell you straight.

Kent. If fortune brag of two she lov'd and hated,
One of them we behold.²

Lear. This is a dull fight: Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same;
Your servant Kent: Where is your servant Caius;

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;
He'll strike, and quickly too:—He's dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good lord: I am the very man;—

Lear. I'll see that straight.

Kent. That from your first of difference and decay,³
ave follow'd your sad steps.

Lear. You are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else;⁴ all's cheerless, dark, and deadly—
Your eldest daughters have fore-doom'd themselves,⁵
And desperately are dead.

Lear.

⁹ It is difficult for an author who never peruses his first works, to avoid repeating some of the same thoughts in his later productions. What Lear has just said, had been anticipated by Justice Shallow in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: "I have seen the time with my long sword I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats." It is again repeated in *Othello*:

"——I have seen the day

"That with this little arm and this good sword

"I have made my way." &c. STEEVENS.

² I suppose by the two whom fortune once loved, and then hated, Kent means, Lear and himself; and that each of them, looking on the other, saw a rare instance of her caprice. He may, however, be only thinking of Lear, the object of her hate. MALONE.

³ Decay for misfortunes. WARBURTON.

⁴ Kent means, *I welcome!* No, nor no man else. MALONE.

⁵ Have *fore-doom'd themselves* is—have anticipated their own doom. To *fordo* is to destroy. STEEVENS.

Lear. Ay, so I think.

Alb. He knows not what he says ; and vain it is
That we present us to him.

Edg. Very bootless.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Edmund is dead, my lord.

Alb. That's but a trifle here.—

You lords and noble friends, know our intent.

What comfort to this great decay may come,⁶

Shall be applied : for us, we will resign,

During the life of this old majesty,

To him our absolute power : You, to your rights ;

[*To EDGAR and KENT.*

With boot,⁷ and such additions as your honours

Have more than merited⁸—All friends shall taste

The wages of their virtue, and all foes

The cup of their deservings.—O, fee, fee!

Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd !⁹ No, no, no life ;

Why

⁶ This *great decay* is Lear, whom Shakspeare poetically calls so, and means the same as if he had said, *this piece of decay'd royalty, this ruin'd majesty.* STEEVENS.

⁷ *With boot,*] With advantage, with increase. JOHNSON.

⁸ These lines are addressed to Kent as well as to Edgar, else the word *honours* would not have been in the plural number. By *honours* is meant *honourable conduct.* M. MASON.

⁹ This is an expression of tenderness for his dead Cordelia (not his fool as some have thought) on whose lips he is still intent, and dies away while he is searching there for indications of life.

Poor fool, in the age of Shakspeare, was an expression of endearment.

I may add, that, *the Fool* of Lear was long ago forgotten. Having filled the space allotted him in the arrangement of the play, he appears to have been silently withdrawn in the 6th scene of the 3d act.—That the thoughts of a father, in the bitterest of all moments, while his favourite child lay dead in his arms, should recur to the antick who had formerly diverted him, has somewhat in it that I cannot reconcile to the idea of genuine sorrow and despair.

Besides this, Cordelia was recently hanged ; but we know not that the *Fool* had suffered in the same manner, nor can imagine why he should. The party adverse to Lear was little interested in the fate of his jester. The only use of him was to contrast and alleviate the sorrows of his master ; and, that purpose being fully answered, the poet's solicitude about him was at an end.

This

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
 And thou no breath at all? O, thou wilt come no more,
 Never

The term—*poor fool* might indeed have misbecome the mouth of a vassal commiserating the untimely end of a princess; but has no impropriety when used by a weak, old, distracted King, in whose mind the distinctions of nature only survive, while he is uttering his last frantick exclamations over a murdered daughter.

Should the foregoing remark, however, be thought erroneous, the reader will forgive it, as it serves to introduce some contradictory observations from a critick, in whose taste and judgement too much confidence cannot easily be placed. STEEVENS.

I confess, I am one of those who *have thought* that Lear means his *Fool*, and not *Cordelia*. If he means *Cordelia*, then what I have always considered as a beauty, is of the same kind as the accidental stroke of the pencil that produced the foam.—Lear's affectionate remembrance of the *Fool* in this place, I used to think, was one of those strokes of genius, or of nature, which are so often found in Shakspeare, and in him only.

Lear appears to have a particular affection for this *Fool*, whose fidelity in attending him, and endeavouring to divert him in his distress, seems to deserve all his kindness.

Poor fool and knave, says he, in the midst of the thunder-storm, *I have one part in my heart that's sorry yet for thee*.

It does not therefore appear to me, to be allowing too much consequence to the *Fool*, in making Lear bestow a thought on him, even when in still greater distress. Lear is represented as a good-natured, passionate, and rather weak old man; it is the old age of a cocker'd spoilt boy. There is no impropriety in giving to such a character those tender domestic affections, which would ill become a more heroick character, such as Othello, Macbeth, or Richard III.

The words—*No, no, no life*; I suppose to be spoken, not tenderly but with passion: Let nothing now live,—let there be universal destruction;—*Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, and thou no breath at all?*

It may be observed, that as there was a necessity, the necessity of propriety at least, that this *Fool*, the favourite of the author, of Lear, and consequently of the audience, should not be lost or forgot, it ought to be known what became of him.—However it must be acknowledged, that we cannot infer much from thence; Shakspeare is not always attentive to finish the figures of his groups.

I have only to add, that if an actor, by adopting the interpretation mentioned above, of applying the words *poor fool* to Cordelia, the audience would, I should imagine, think it a strange mode of expressing the grief and affection of a father for his dead daughter, and that daughter a queen.—The words *poor fool*, are undoubtedly expressive of endearment; and Shakspeare himself, in another place speaking of a dying animal, calls it *poor dappled fool*: but it never is, nor never can be, used with any degree of propriety, but to commiserate some very inferior object, which may be loved, without much esteem or respect. SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Never, never, never, never, never!

Pray you undo this button: ⁹ Thank you, sir!—

Do you see this? Look on her,—look,—her lips.—

Look there, look there!

[*He dies.*
Edg.

It is not without some reluctance that I express my dissent from the friend whose name is subscribed to the preceding note; whose observations on all subjects of criticism and taste are so ingenious and just, that posterity may be at a loss to determine, whether his consummate skill and execution in his own art, or his judgement on that and other kindred arts, were superior. But *magis amica veritas* should be the motto of every editor of Shakspeare; in conformity to which I must add, that I have not the smallest doubt that Mr. Steevens's interpretation of these words is the true one. The passage indeed before us appears to me so clear, and so inapplicable to any person but Cordelia, that I fear the reader may think any further comment on it altogether superfluous.

It is observable that Lear from the time of his entrance in this scene to his uttering these words, and from thence to his death, is wholly occupied by the loss of his daughter. He is diverted indeed from it for a moment by the intrusion of Kent, who forces himself on his notice; but he instantly returns to his beloved Cordelia, over whose dead body he continues to hang. He is now himself in the agony of death; and surely at such a time, when his heart is just breaking, it would be highly unnatural that he should think of his fool. But the great and *decisive* objection to such a supposition is that which Mr. Steevens has mentioned; that Lear has just seen his daughter *hanged*, having unfortunately been admitted too late to preserve her life, though time enough to punish the perpetrator of the act: but we have no authority whatsoever for supposing his Fool hanged also.

Whether the expression—*poor fool*—can be applied with propriety only to *inferior objects, for whom we have not much respect or esteem*, is not, I conceive, the question. Shakspeare does not always use his terms with strict propriety, but he is always the best commentator to himself, and he certainly *has* applied this term in another place to the *young, the beautiful, and innocent*, Adonis, the object of somewhat more than the esteem of a goddess:

“For pity now she can no more detain him;

“The *poor fool* prays her that he may depart.”

Nor was the phraseology which has occasioned this long note, peculiar to Shakspeare. It was long before his time incorporated in our language.

In old English a *fool* and an *innocent* were synonymous terms. Hence probably the peculiar use of the expression—*poor fool*. In the passage before us, Lear, I conceive, means by it, *dear, tender, helpless innocence!*

MALONE.

⁹ The Rev. Dr. Joseph Warton judiciously observes, that the swelling and heaving of the heart is described by *this* most expressive circumstance.

STEEVENS.

Edg. He faints !—My lord, my lord.—

Kent. Break, heart ; I pr'ythee, break !

Edg. Look up, my lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost : O, let him pass ! he hates him,
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

Edg. O, he is gone, indeed.

Kent. The wonder is, he hath endur'd so long :
He but usurp'd his life.

Alb. Bear them from hence.—Our present business
Is general woe. Friends of my soul, you twain

[to KENT and EDGAR.]

Rule in this realm, and the gor'd state sustain.

Kent. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go ;
My master calls, and I must not say, no.²

Alb. The weight of this sad time we must obey :³
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

The oldest hath borne most : we that are young,
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

[*Exeunt with a dead march.*]⁴

² The modern editors have supposed that Kent expires after he has repeated these two last lines, but the speech rather appears to be meant for a despairing than a dying man ; and as the old editions give no marginal direction for his death, I have forborn to insert any. STEEVENS.

The second folio, at the end of this speech, has the word—*Dyes*, in the margin. RITSON.

Kent in his entrance in this scene says,

“ I am come

“ To bid my king and master aye good night ;”—

but this, like the speech before us, only marks the despondency of the speaker. The word *shortly* [i. e. some time hence, at no very distant period,] decisively proves, that the poet did not mean to make him die on the scene. He merely says, that he shall not *live long*, and therefore cannot undertake the office assigned to him.

The marginal direction, *he dies*, was first introduced by the ignorant editor of the second folio. MALONE.

³ This speech from the authority of the old quarto is rightly placed to Albany : in the edition by the players, it is given to Edgar, by whom, I doubt not, it was of custom spoken. And the case was this : he who played Edgar, being a more favourite actor than he who performed Albany, in spite of decorum it was thought proper he should have the last word.

THEOBALD.

⁴ The tragedy of Lear is deservedly celebrated among the Dramas of Shakspeare. There is perhaps no play which keeps the attention so strongly

strongly fixed; which so much agitates our passions, and interests our curiosity. The artful involutions of distinct interests, the striking opposition of contrary characters, the sudden changes of fortune, and the quick succession of events, fill the mind with a perpetual tumult of indignation, pity, and hope. There is no scene which does not contribute to the aggravation of the distress or conduct of the action, and scarce a line which does not conduce to the progress of the scene. So powerful is the current of the poet's imagination, that the mind, which once ventures within it, is hurried irresistibly along.

On the seeming improbability of Lear's conduct, it may be observed, that he is represented according to histories at that time vulgarly received as true. And, perhaps, if we turn our thoughts upon the barbarity and ignorance of the age to which this story is referred, it will appear not so unlikely as while we estimate Lear's manners by our own. Such preference of one daughter to another, or resignation of dominion on such conditions, would be yet credible, if told of a petty prince of Guinea or Madagascar. Shakspeare, indeed, by the mention of his earls and dukes, has given us the idea of times more civilized, and of life regulated by softer manners; and the truth is, that though he so nicely discriminates, and so minutely describes the characters of men, he commonly neglects and confounds the characters of ages, by mingling customs ancient and modern, English and foreign.

My learned friend Mr. Warton, who has in *The Adventurer* very minutely criticised this play, remarks, that the instances of cruelty are too savage and shocking, and that the intervention of Edmund destroys the simplicity of the story. These objections may, I think, be answered, by repeating, that the cruelty of the daughters is an historical fact, to which the poet has added little, having only drawn it into a series by dialogue and action. But I am not able to apologize with equal plausibility for the extrusion of Gloucester's eyes, which seems an act too horrid to be endured in dramatick exhibition, and such as must always compel the mind to relieve its distress by incredulity. Yet let it be remembered that our author well knew what would please the audience for which he wrote.

The injury done by Edmund to the simplicity of the action is abundantly recompensed by the addition of variety, by the art with which he is made to co-operate with the chief design, and the opportunity which he gives the poet of combining perfidy with perfidy, and connecting the wicked son with the wicked daughters, to impress this important moral, that villainy is never at a stop, that crimes lead to crimes, and at last terminate in ruin.

But though this moral be incidentally enforced, Shakspeare has suffered the virtue of Cordelia to perish in a just cause, contrary to the natural ideas of justice, to the hope of the reader, and, what is yet more strange, to the faith of chronicles. Yet this conduct is justified by *The Spectator*, who blames Tate for giving Cordelia success and happiness in his alteration, and declares, that, in his opinion, *the Tragedy has lost half its beauty*. Dennis has remarked, whether justly or not, that, to secure the favourable reception of *Cato*, *the town was poisoned with much false and abominable criticism*.

criticism, and that endeavours had been used to discredit and decry poetical justice. A play in which the wicked prosper, and the virtuous miscarry, may doubtless be good, because it is a just representation of the common events of human life: but since all reasonable beings naturally love justice, I cannot easily be persuaded, that the observation of justice makes a play worse; or, that if other excellencies are equal, the audience will not always rise better pleased from the final triumph of persecuted virtue.

In the present case the public has decided.* Cordelia, from the time of Tate, has always retired with victory and felicity. And, if my sensations could add any thing to the general suffrage, I might relate, I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.

There is another controversy among the criticks concerning this play. It is disputed whether the predominant image in Lear's disordered mind be the loss of his kingdom or the cruelty of his daughters. Mr. Murphy, a very judicious critick, has evinced by induction of particular passages, that the cruelty of his daughters is the primary source of his distress, and that the loss of royalty affects him only as a secondary and subordinate evil. He observes with great justness, that Lear would move our compassion but little, did we not rather consider the injured father than the degraded king.

The story of this play, except the episode of Edmund, which is derived, I think, from Sidney, is taken originally from Geoffry of Monmouth, whom Holinshed generally copied; but perhaps immediately from an old historical ballad. My reason for believing that the play was posterior to the ballad, rather than the ballad to the play, is, that the ballad has nothing of Shakspeare's nocturnal tempest, which is too striking to have been omitted, and that it follows the chronicle; it has the rudiments of the play, but none of its amplifications: it first hinted Lear's madness, but did not array it in circumstances. The writer of the ballad added something to the history, which is a proof that he would have added more, if more had occurred to his mind, and more must have occurred if he had seen Shakspeare. JOHNSON.

The episode of Gloster and his sons is borrowed from Sidney's *Arcadia*, in which we find a chapter, which is said to be entitled, in the first edition of 1590, "The pitifull state and storie of the Paphlagonian unkinde king, and his kind sonne: first related by the sonne, then by the blind father." MALONE.

* Dr. Johnson should rather have said that the managers of the theatres-royal have decided, and the public has been obliged to acquiesce in their decision. The altered play has the upper gallery on its side; the original drama was patronized by Addison:

Victis causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni. STEEVENS.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

* * The story on which this play is founded, is related as a true one in *Girolamo de la Corte's History of Verona*. It was originally published by an anonymous Italian novelist in 1549 at Venice; and again in 1553, at the same place. The first edition of Bandello's work appeared a year later than the last of these already mentioned. Pierre Boisteau copied it with alterations and additions. Belleforest adopted it in the first volume of his collection 1596; but very probably some edition of it yet more ancient had found its way abroad; as, in this improved state, it was translated into English, by Arthur Brooke, and published in an octavo volume, 1562, but without a name. On this occasion it appears in the form of a poem entitled, *The tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*: It was republished in 1587, under the same title: "*Contayning in it a rare Example of true constancie; with the subtile Counsels and Practises of an old Fryer, and their Event. Imprinted by R. Robinson.*" Among the entries on the Books of the Stationers' Company, I find Feb. 18, 1582. "*M. Tottel] Romeo and Julietta.*" Again Aug. 5, 1596: "*Edward White] a new ballad of Romeo and Juliet.*" The same story is found in *The Palace of Pleasure*: however, Shakspeare was not entirely indebted to Painter's epitome; but rather to the poem already mentioned. Stanyhurst, the translator of Virgil in 1582, enumerates Julietta among his heroines, in a piece which he calls an epitaph, or Commune Defunctorum: and it appears (as Dr. Farmer has observed,) from a passage in Ames's *Typographical Antiquities*, that the story had likewise been translated by another hand. Captain Breval in his *Travels* tells us, that he saw at Verona the tomb of these unhappy lovers. STEEVENS.

This story was well known to the English poets before the time of Shakspeare. In an old collection of poems, called *A gorgeous gallery of gallant Inventions*, 1578, I find it mentioned:

"Sir Romeus' annoy but trifle seems to mine."

And again, *Romeus and Juliet* are celebrated in "*A Poor Knight his Palace of private Pleasure*, 1579." FARMER.

The first of the foregoing notes was prefixed to two of our former editions; but as the following may be in some respects more correct, it would be unjustly withheld from the publick.—This is not the first time we have profited by the accuracy of Mr. Malone. STEEVENS.

The original relater of the story on which this play is formed, was Luigi da Porto, a gentleman of Vicenza, who died in 1529. His novel did not appear till some years after his death; being first printed at Venice in 1535, under the title of *La Giuletta*. A second edition was published in 1539: and it was again reprinted at the same place in 1553, (without the author's name,) with the following title: *Historia nuovamente ritrovata di due nobili Amanti, con la loro pietosa morte; intervenuta gia nella citta di Verona, nell tempo del Signor Bartolomeo della Scala. Nuovamente stampata.* Of the author some account may be found prefixed to the poem of *Romeus and Juliet*.

In 1554 Bandello published, at Lucca, a novel on the same subject; [Tom. II. Nov. ix.] and shortly afterwards Boisteau exhibited one in French,

French, founded on the Italian narratives, but varying from them in many particulars. From Boisteau's novel the same story was, in 1562, formed into an English poem, with considerable alterations and large additions, by Mr. Arthur Brooke. This piece, was printed by Richard Tottel, with the following title, written probably, according to the fashion of that time, by the bookseller: *The Tragicall Hystory of Romeus and Juliet, containing a rare example of true constancie: with the subtill counsels, and practises of an old Fryer, and their ill event.* It was again published by the same bookseller in 1582. Painter in the second volume of his *Palace of Pleasure*, 1567, published a prose translation from the French of Boisteau, which he entitled *Rhomeo and Julietta*. Shakspeare had probably read Painter's novel, having taken one circumstance from it or some other prose translation of Boisteau; but his play was undoubtedly formed on the poem of Arthur Brooke. This is proved decisively by the following circumstances. 1. In the poem the prince of Verona is called *Escalus*; so also in the play.—In Painter's translation from Boisteau he is named *Signor Escala*; and sometimes *Lord Bartholomew of Escala*. 2. In Painter's novel the family of Romeo are called the *Montescbes*; in the poem and in the play, the *Montagues*. 3. The messenger employed by friar Lawrence to carry a letter to Romeo to inform him when Juliet would awake from her trance, is in Painter's translation called *Anselme*: in the poem, and in the play, friar *John* is employed in this business. 4. The circumstance of Capulet's writing down the names of the guests whom he invites to supper, is found in the poem and in the play, but is not mentioned by Painter, nor is it found in the original Italian novel. 5. The residence of the Capulets, in the original, and in Painter, is called *Villa Franca*; in the poem and in the play *Freetown*. 6. Several passages of *Romeo and Juliet* appear to have been formed on hints furnished by the poem, of which no traces are found either in Painter's novel, or in Boisteau, or the original; and several expressions are borrowed from thence, which will be found in their proper places.

As what has been now stated has been controverted, (for what may not be controverted?) I should enter more largely into the subject, but that the various passages of the poem which I have quoted in the following notes, furnish such a decisive proof of the play's having been constructed upon it, as not to leave, in my apprehension, a shadow of doubt upon the subject. The question is not, whether Shakspeare had read other novels, or other poetical pieces, founded on this story, but whether the poem written by Arthur Brooke was the *basis* on which his play was built.

With respect to the name of Romeo, this also Shakspeare might have found in the poem; for in one place that name is given to him: or he might have had it from Painter's novel, from which or from some other prose translation of the same story he has, as I have already said, taken one circumstance not mentioned in the poem. In 1570 was entered on the Stationers' books by Henry Bynneman, *The Pitifull Hystory of ij lewyng*

loving Italians, which I suspect was a prose narrative of the story on which our author's play is constructed.

Breval says in his travels, that on a strict inquiry into the histories of Verona, he found that Shakspeare had varied very little from the truth, either in the names, characters, or other circumstances of his play.

MALONE.

It is plain, from more than one circumstance, that Shakspeare had read this novel, both in its prosaick and metrical form. He might likewise have met with other poetical pieces on the same subject. We are not yet at the end of our discoveries relative to the originals of our author's dramatick pieces. STEEVENS.

P R O L O G U E.

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
Do, with their death, bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffick of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend. *

PERSONS

* This prologue, after the first copy was published in 1597, received several alterations, both in respect of correctness and versification. In the folio it is omitted.—The play was originally performed by *the Right Honourable the Lord of Hunsdon his servants*.

In the first of K. James I. was made an act of parliament for some restraint or limitation of noblemen in the protection of players, or of players under their sanction. STEEVENS.

Under the word PROLOGUE, in the copy of 1599 is printed *Chorus*, which I suppose meant only that the prologue was to be spoken by the same person who personated the chorus at the end of the first act.

The original prologue, in the quarto of 1597, stands thus:

Two household frends, alike in dignitie,
In faire Verona, where we lay our scene,
From civil broyles broke into enmitie,
Whose civill warre makes civill hands uncleane.
From forth the fatall loynes of these two foes
A paire of starre-croft lovers tooke their life;
Whose misadventures, piteous overthrowes,
(Through the continuing of their fathers' strife,
And death-markt passage of their parents' rage,)
Is now the two howres traffique of our stage.
The which if you with patient eares attend,
What here we want, wee'll studie to amend. MALONE.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Escalus, *Prince of Verona.*
Paris, *a young nobleman, kinsman to the Prince.*
Montague, } *Heads of two Houses, at variance with each*
Capulet, } *other.*
An old Man, uncle to Capulet.
Romeo, *son to Montague.*
Mercutio, *kinsman to the Prince, and friend to Romeo.*
Benvolio, *nephew to Montague, and friend to Romeo.*
Tybalt, *nephew to Lady Capulet.*
Friar Lawrence, *a Franciscan.*
Friar John, *of the same order.*
Balthazar, *servant to Romeo.*
Sampson, } *servants to Capulet.*
Gregory, }
Abram, *servant to Montague.*
An Apothecary.
Three Musicians.
Chorus. *Boy; Page to Paris; Peter, an Officer.*

Lady Montague, Wife to Montague.
Lady Capulet, Wife to Capulet.
Juliet, Daughter to Capulet.
Nurse to Juliet.

Citizens of Verona; several Men and Women, relations to both houses; Maskers, Guards, Watchmen, and Attendants.

SCENE *during the greater part of the play, in Verona: once in the fifth Act at Mantua.*

ROMEO AND JULIET.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A publick Place.

Enter SAMPSON and GREGORY, armed with swords and bucklers.

Sam. Gregory, o'my word, we'll not carry coals.²

Gr. No, for then we should be colliers.

Sam.

² Dr Warburton very justly observes, that this was a phrase formerly in use to signify *the bearing injuries*: but, as he has given no instances in support of his declaration I thought it necessary to subjoin the following. So, Skelton:

“ ———You, I say, Julian,

“ Wyll you beare no coles?”

Again, Nash, in his *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, 1795, says:

“ We will bear no coles, I warrant you.” STEEVENS.

This phrase continued to be in use down to the middle of the last century. In a little satirical piece of Sir John Birkenhead, intitled, “Two centuries [of Books] of St. Paul's Churchyard,” &c. published after the death of K. Charles I. No. 22. page 50, is inserted “*Fire, Fire!* a small manual, dedicated to Sir Arthur Haselridge; in which it is plainly proved by a whole chauldron of scripture, that *John Liliburn* will not carry coals” By Dr. Gouge. PERCY.

Notwithstanding this accumulation of passages in which the phrase itself occurs, the original of it is still left unexplored.—“If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.” &c. Prov. xxv. 22.—or as cited in the Epistle to the Romans, xx. 20. HENLEY.

The English version of the Bible (exclusive of its nobler use) has proved of infinite service to literary antiquaries; but on the present occasion, I fear, it will do us little good. *Collier* was a very ancient term of abuse, “Hang him, foul Collier!” says Sir Toby Belch, speaking of the Devil, in the fourth act of *Twelfth Night*. Any person therefore who would bear to be called *collier*, was said to carry coals. It afterwards became descriptive of any one who would endure a gibe or flout.

STEEVENS.

The phrase should seem to mean originally, we'll not submit to servile offices; and thence secondarily, we'll not endure injuries. It has been suggested,

Sam. I mean an we be in choler we'll draw.

Gre. Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of the collar.

Sam. I strike quickly, being moved.

Gre. But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

Sam. A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

Gre. To move, is—to stir; and to be valiant, is—to stand to it: therefore if thou art moved, thou run'st away.

Sam. A dog of that house shall move me to stand: I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

Gre. That shows thee a weak slave; for the weakest goes to the wall.

Sam. True; and therefore women, being the weaker vessels, are ever thrust to the wall: therefore I will push Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall.

Gre. The quarrel is between our masters, and us their men.

Sam. 'Tis all one, I will show myself a tyrant: when I have fought with the men, I will be cruel with the maids; I will cut off their heads.

Gre. The heads of the maids?

Sam. Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maiden-heads; take it in what sense thou wilt.

Gre. They must take it in sense, that feel it.

Sam. Me they shall feel, while I am able to stand: and, 'tis known, I am a pretty piece of flesh.

Gre. 'Tis well, thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou hadst been Poor John.³ Draw thy tool; here comes two of the house of the Montagues.⁴

Enter

suggested, that it may mean, “*we'll not bear resentment burning like a coal of fire in our bosoms, without breaking out into some outrage;*” with allusion to the proverbial sentence, that smothered anger is a coal of fire in the bosom: But the word *carry* seems adverse to such an interpretation.

MALONE.

³ — *poor John*] is hake, dried, and salted. MALONE.

⁴ It should be observed, that the partizans of the Montague family wore a token in their hats, in order to distinguish them from their enemies, the Capulets. Hence throughout this play, they are known at a distance. MALONE

Enter ABRAM and BALTHASAR.

Sam. My naked weapon is out; quarrel, I will back thee.

Gre. How? turn thy back, and run?

Sam. Fear me not.

Gre. No, marry: I fear thee!

Sam. Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.

Gre. I will frown as I pass by; and let them take it as they list.

Sam. Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them; which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it⁵.

Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, fir?

Sam. I do bite my thumb, fir.

Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, fir?

Sam. Is the law on our side, if I say—ay?

Gre. No.

Sam. No, fir, I do not bite my thumb at you, fir, but I bite my thumb, fir.

Gre. Do you quarrel, fir?

Abr. Quarrel, fir? no, fir.

Sam. If you do, fir, I am for you; I serve as good a man as you.

Abr. No better.

Sam. Well, fir.

*Enter BENVOLIO,*⁶ *at a distance.*

Gre. Say—better; here comes one of my master's kinsmen.⁷

Sam.

⁵ This mode of quarreling appears to have been common in our author's time. "What swearing is there, (says Decker, describing the various groupes that daily frequented the walks of St. Paul's Church,) what shouldering, what jostling, what jeering, what *byting of thumbs*, to beget quarrels!" THE DEAD TERM, 1608. MALONE.

⁶ Much of this scene is added since the first edition; but probably by Shakspeare, since we find it in that of the year 1599. POPE.

⁷ Some mistake has happened in this place: Gregory is a servant of the Capulets, and Benvolio was of the Montague faction. FARMER.

Perhaps there is no mistake. Gregory may mean Tybalt, who enters immediately after Benvolio, but on a different part of the stage. The eyes of the servant may be directed the way he sees Tybalt coming, and in the mean time, Benvolio enters on the opposite side. STEEVENS.

Sam. Yes, better, fir.

Abr. You lie.

Sam. Draw, if you be men.—Gregory, remember thy swashing blow.⁸ [*They fight.*]

Ben. Part fools; put up your swords; you know not what you do. [*beats down their swords.*]

Enter TYBALT.

Tyb. What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds? Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.

Ben. I do but keep the peace; put up thy sword, Or manage it to part these men with me.

Tyb. What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word, As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee: Have at thee, coward. [*They fight.*]

Enter several Partizans of both houses, who join the fray; then enter Citizens, with Clubs.

1 Cit. Clubs, bills,⁹ and partizans! strike! beat them down!

Down with the Capulets! down with the Montagues!

Enter CAPULET, in his gown; and Lady CAPULET.

Cap. What noise is this?—Give me my long sword,² ho!

Lady Cap. A crutch, a crutch!—Why call you for a sword?

Cap. My sword, I say!—Old Montague is come, And flourishes his blade in spite of me.

Enter

⁸ To *swash* seems to have meant to be a bully, to be noisily valiant.

STEEVENS.

⁹ When an affray arose in the streets, *clubs* was the usual exclamation.

MALONE.

² The *long sword* was the sword used in war, which was sometimes wielded with both hands. JOHNSON.

It appears that it was once the fashion to wear two swords of different sizes at the same time.

So, in Decker's *Satiromastix*, 1602:

“Peter Salamander, tie up your *great* and your *little sword*.”

The *little sword* was the weapon commonly worn, the dress sword.

STEEVENS.

The little sword was probably nothing more than a *dagger*. MALONE.

Enter MONTAGUE and Lady MONTAGUE.

Mon. Thou villain, Capulet.—Hold me not, let me go.

Lady Mon. Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.

Enter Prince, with Attendants.

Prin. Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel,—
Will they not hear?—what ho? you men, you beasts,—
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mis-temper'd weapons³ to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.—
Three civil brawls bred of an airy word,
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets;
And made Verona's ancient citizens
Cast by their grave befitting ornaments,
To wield old partizans, in hands as old,
Canker'd with peace, to part your canker'd hate;
If ever you disturb our streets again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
For this time all the rest depart away:
You, Capulet, shall go along with me;
And Montague, come you this afternoon,
To know our further pleasure in this case,
To old Free-town, our common judgment-place.
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.

[Exeunt Prince, and Attendants; CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, TYBALT, Citizens, and Servants.]

Mon. Who set this ancient quarrel new abroach?—
Speak, nephew, were you by, when it began?

Ben. Here were the servants of your adversary,
And yours, close fighting ere I did approach:
I drew to part them; in the instant came
The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepar'd;
Which, as he breath'd defiance to my ears,

He

³ —mis-temper'd weapons—] *are angry weapons.* STEEVENS.

He swung about his head, and cut the winds,
 Who, nothing hurt withal, hiss'd him in scorn:
 While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,
 Came more and more, and fought on part and part,
 Till the prince came, who parted either part.

La. Mon. O where is Romeo!—saw you him to-day?
 Right glad I am, he was not in this fray.

Ben. Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun
 Peer'd forth the golden window of the east,
 A troubled mind drave me to walk abroad;
 Where,—underneath the grove of sycamore,
 That westward rooteth from the city's side,—
 So early walking did I see your son:
 Towards him I made; but he was 'ware of me,
 And stole into the covert of the wood:
 I, measuring his affections by my own,—
 That most are busied when they are most alone.—
 Pursu'd my humour, not pursuing his,
 And gladly shunn'd who gladly fled from me.

Mon. Many a morning hath he there been seen,
 With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,
 Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs:
 But all so soon as the all-cheering sun
 Should in the furthest east begin to draw
 The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,
 Away from light steals home my heavy son,
 And private in his chamber pens himself;
 Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,
 And makes himself an artificial night:
 Black and portentous must this humour prove,
 Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

Ben. My noble uncle, do you know the cause?

Mon. I neither know it, nor can learn of him.

Ben. Have you importun'd him by any means?

Mon. Both by myself, and many other friends:
 But he, his own affections' counsellor,
 Is to himself—I will not say, how true—
 But to himself so secret and so close,
 So far from sounding and discovery,
 As is the bud bit with an envious worm,

Ere

Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.⁴
Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,
We would as willingly give cure, as know.

Enter Romeo, at a distance.

Ben. See, where he comes: So please you, step aside;
I'll know his grievance, or be much deny'd.

Mon. I would, thou wert so happy by thy stay,
To hear true shrift.—Come, madam, let's away.

[Exeunt MONTAGUE and Lady.]

Ben. Good morrow, cousin.

Rom. Is the day so young.⁵

Ben. But new struck nine.

Rom. Ah me! sad hours seem long.

Was that my father that went hence so fast?

Ben. It was: What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

Rom. Not having that, which, having, makes them short.

Ben. In love?

Rom. Out—

Ben. Of love?

Rom. Out of her favour, where I am in love.

Ben. Alas, that Love, so gentle in his view,

Should

⁴ Old copy—to the *same*. When we come to consider, that there is some power else besides *balmy air*, that brings forth, and makes the tender buds spread themselves, I do not think it improbable that the poet wrote:

Or dedicate his beauty to the *sun*.

Or, according to the more obsolete spelling, *sunne*; which brings it nearer to the traces of the corrupted text. THEOBALD.

I cannot but suspect that some lines are lost, which connected this simile more closely with the foregoing speech: these lines, if such there were, lamented the danger that Romeo will die of his melancholy, before his virtues or abilities were known to the world. JOHNSON.

I suspect no loss of connecting lines. An expression somewhat similar occurs in *Timon*, Act IV. sc. ii: “A dedicated beggar to the air.”

I have, however, adopted Theobald's emendation. Mr. M. Mason observes “that there is not a single passage in our author where so great an improvement of language is obtained, by so slight a deviation from the text.” STEEVENS.

Dr. Johnson's conjecture is, I think unfounded; the simile relates solely to Romeo's *concealing* the cause of his melancholy, and is again used by Shakspeare in *Twelfth Night*. MALONE.

⁵ i. e. is it so early in the day? STEEVENS.

Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!

Rom. Alas, that love, whose view is muffled still,
Should, without eyes, see pathways to his will! ⁶
Where shall we dine?—O me!—What fray was here?
Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.
Here's much to do with hate, but more with love:
Why then, O brawling love! ⁷ O loving hate!
O any thing, of nothing first create!
O heavy lightness! serious vanity!
Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
This love feel I, that feel no love in this.
Dost thou not laugh?

Ben. No, coz, I rather weep.

Rom. Good heart, at what?

Ben.

⁶ Sir T. Hanmer, and after him Dr. Warburton, read—to his *ill*. The present reading has some obscurity; the meaning may be that *love*, finds out means to pursue his *desire*. That the *blind* should *find paths to ill* is no great wonder. JOHNSON.

It is not unusual for those who are blinded by Love to overlook every difficulty that opposes their pursuit. NICHOLS.

What Romeo seems to lament is, that Love, though blind, should discover pathways to his will, and yet cannot avail himself of them; should perceive the road which he is forbidden to take. STEEVENS.

This passage seems to have been misapprehended. Benvolio has lamented that the *God of love*, who appears so gentle, should be a tyrant.—It is no less to be lamented, adds Romeo, that the *blind god* should yet be able to direct his arrows at those whom he wishes to hit, that he should wound whomever he *wills*, or desires to wound. MALONE.

⁷ Of these lines neither the sense nor occasion is very evident. He is not yet in love with an enemy; and to love one and hate another is no such uncommon state, as can deserve all this toil of antithesis. JOHNSON.

Had Dr. Johnson attended to the letter of invitation in the next scene, he would have found that Rosaline was niece to Capulet. ANONYMOUS.

Every sonneteer characterises Love by contrarieties. Watson begins one of his canzonets:

“ Love is a lowre delight, a sugred grieve,

“ A living death, an ever-dying life.” &c.

Turberville makes Reason harangue against it in the same manner:

“ A fierie frost, a flame that frozen is with life!

“ A heavie burden light to beare! A vertue fraught with vice!” &c. FARMER.

Ben. At thy good heart's oppression.

Rom. Why, such is love's transgression⁸—
Griefs of mine own lie heavy in my breast;
Which thou wilt propagate, to have it prest
With more of thine: this love, that thou hast shown,
Doth add more grief to too much of mine own.
Love is a smoke rais'd with the fume of sighs;
Being purg'd, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;⁹
Being vex'd, a sea nourish'd with lover's tears:
What is it else? a madness most discreet,
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.
Farewell, my coz. [going.]

Ben. Soft, I will go along;
An if you leave me so, you do me wrong.

Rom. Tut, I have lost myself; I am not here;
This is not Romeo, he's some other where.

Ben. Tell me in sadness,² who she is you love.

Rom. What, shall I groan, and tell thee?

Ben. Groan? why, no;
But sadly tell me, who.

Rom. Bid a sick man in sadness make his will:—
Ah, word ill urg'd to one that is so ill!—
In sadness, Cousin, I do love a woman.

Ben. I aim'd so near, when I suppos'd you lov'd.

Rom. A right good marks-man!—And she's fair I love.

Ben. A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit.

Rom. Well, in that hit, you miss: she'll not be hit
With Cupid's arrow, she hath Dian's wit;
And, in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,³
From love's weak childish bow she lives unharm'd.

She

⁸ Such is the consequence of unskilful and mistaken kindness.

JOHNSON.

⁹ The author may mean *being purged of smoke*, but it is perhaps a meaning never given to the word in any other place. I would rather read, *Being urg'd, a fire sparkling*— Being excited and enforced. To *urge* the fire is the technical term. JOHNSON.

² That is, tell me *gravely*, tell me in *seriousness*. JOHNSON.

³ As this play was written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, I cannot help regarding these speeches of Romeo as an oblique compliment to her majesty, who was not liable to be displeased at hearing her chastity praised after she was suspected to have lost it, or her beauty commended in the

She will not stay the siege of loving terms,
Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,
Nor ope her lap to faint-seducing gold:
O, she is rich in beauty; only poor,
That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.⁴

Ben. Then she hath sworn, that she will still live chaste?

Rom. She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste;
For beauty, starv'd with her severity,
Cuts beauty off from all posterity.

She is too fair, too wise: wisely too fair,⁵

To merit blifs by making me despair:

She hath forsworn to love; and in that vow,

Do I live dead, that live to tell it now.

Ben. Be rul'd by me, forget to think of her.

Rom. O, teach me how I should forget to think.

Ben. By giving liberty to thine eyes;

Examine

67th year of her age, though she never possessed any when she was young. Her declaration that she would continue unmarried, increases the probability of the present supposition. STEEVENS.

In chastity *of proof*, as we say in armour *of proof*. JOHNSON.

⁴ Mr Theobald reads, "*With her dies beauty's store.*" and is followed by the two succeeding editors. I have replaced the old reading, because I think it at least as plausible as the correction. *She is rich*, says he, *in beauty*, and *only poor* in being subject to the lot of humanity, that *her store*, or riches, *can be destroyed by death*, who shall, by the same blow, put an end to beauty. JOHNSON.

Mr. Theobald's alteration may be countenanced by the following passage in our author's 14th sonnet:

"Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date."

STEEVENS.

Yet perhaps the present reading may be right, and Romeo means to say, in his quaint jargon, That she is poor, because she leaves no part of her store behind her, as with her all beauty will die. M. MASON.

Words are sometimes shuffled out of their places at the press; but that they should be at once transposed and corrupted, is highly improbable. I have no doubt that the old copies are right. *She is rich* in beauty; and *poor* in this circumstance alone, that with her, beauty will expire; her *store* of wealth [which the poet has already said was the fairness of her person,] will not be transmitted to posterity, inasmuch as she will "lead her graces to the grave, and leave the world no copy." MALONE.

⁵ There is in her too much sanctimonious wisdom united with beauty, which induces her to continue chaste with the hopes of attaining heavenly blifs. MALONE.

Examine other beauties.

Rom. 'Tis the way
To call hers, exquisite, in question more :⁶
These happy masks,⁷ that kiss fair ladies' brows,
Being black, put us in mind they hide the fair ;
He, that is stricken blind, cannot forget
The precious treasure of his eyesight lost :
Show me a mistress that is passing fair,
What doth her beauty serve,⁸ but as a note
Where I may read, who pass'd that passing fair ?
Farewell ; thou canst not teach me to forget.

Ben. I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Street.

Enter CAPULET, Paris, and Servant.

Cap. And Montague is bound as well as I,
In penalty alike ; and 'tis not hard, I think,
For men so old as we to keep the peace.

Par. Of honourable reckoning are you both ;
And pity 'tis, you liv'd at odds so long.
But now, my lord, what say you to my suit ?

Cap. But saying o'er what I have said before :
My child is yet a stranger in the world,
She hath not seen the change of fourteen years ;
Let two more summers wither in their pride,
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

Par. Younger than she are happy mothers made.

Cap. And too soon marr'd are those so early made.⁹

The

⁶ That is, to call hers, which is exquisite, the more into my remembrance and contemplation. It is in this sense, and not in that of doubt, or dispute, that the word *question* is here used. HEATH.

More into talk ; to make her unparalleled beauty more the subject of thought and conversation. MALONE.

⁷ i. e. the masks worn by female spectators of the play. STEEVENS.

These happy masks, I believe, means no more than *the happy masks*. Such is Mr. Tyrwhitt's opinion. MALONE.

⁸ i. e. what end does it answer ? In modern language we say—"serve for." STEEVENS.

⁹ *Making and marring* is enumerated among other unlawful games in

The earth hath swallow'd all my hopes but she,
 She is the hopeful lady of my earth : ⁹
 But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,
 My will to ² her consent is but a part ;
 An she agree, within her scope of choice
 Lies my consent and fair according voice.
 This night I hold an old accustom'd feast,
 Whereto I have invited many a guest,
 Such as I love ; and you among the store,
 One more, most welcome, makes my number more.
 At my poor house, look to behold this night
 Earth-treading stars, that make dark heaven light : ³

Such

the Stat. 2 and 3 Phi. and Ma. c. 9. Great improvements have been made on this ancient game in the present century. MALONE.

⁹ This is a Gallicism : *Fille de terre* is the French phrase for an *heiress*.

King Richard II. calls his land, i. e. his kingdom, *his earth* :

“ Feed not thy Sovereign's foe, my gentle *earth*.”

STEEVENS.

The explanation of Mr. Steevens may be right ; but there is a passage in *The Maid's Tragedy*, which leads to another, where Amintor says,

“ This *earth* of mine doth tremble, and I feel

“ A stark affrighted motion in my blood.”

Here *earth* means corporal part. M. MASON.

² To, in this instance, signifies *in comparison with, in proportion to*.

STEEVENS.

³ This nonsense should be reformed thus :

Earth-treading stars that make dark *even* light :

i. e. When the evening is dark, and without stars, these earthly stars, supply their place, and light it up. So again in this play :

“ Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night,

“ Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear.” WARBURTON.

But why nonsense ? is any thing more commonly said, than that beauties eclipse the sun ? Has not Pope the thought and the word ?

“ Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,

“ And op'd those eyes that must *eclipse the day*.”

Both the old and the new reading are philosophical nonsense ; but they are both, and both equally, poetical sense. JOHNSON.

I will not say that this passage, as it stands, is absolute nonsense ; but I think it very absurd, and am certain that it is not capable of the meaning that Johnson attributes to it, without the alteration I mean to propose, which is, to read,

Earth-treading stars that make dark, heaven's light.

That is, *earthly stars* that outshine the stars of heaven, and make them appear

Such comfort, as do lusty young men feel ⁴
 When well-apparell'd April on the heel
 Of limpid winter treads, even such delight
 Among fresh female buds shall you this night
 Inherit at my house; ⁵ hear all, all see,
 And like her most, whose merit most shall be:
 Such, amongst view of many, mine, being one,
 May stand in number, though in reckoning none. ⁶

Come,

appear dark by their own superior brightness. But according to the present reading, they are earthly stars that enlighten the gloom of heaven. M. MASON.

⁴ To say, and to say in pompous words, that a young man shall feel as much in an assembly of beauties, as young men feel in the month of April, is surely to waste sound upon a very poor sentiment. I read:

Such comfort as do lusty yeomen feel.

You shall feel from the sight and conversation of these ladies, such hopes of happiness and such pleasure, as the farmer receives from the spring, when the plenty of the year begins, and the prospect of the harvest fills him with delight. JOHNSON.

Young men are certainly yeomen. See Spelman's Glossary; voce JUNIORS. It is no less singular that in a subsequent act of this very play the old copies should, in two places, read "*young trees*" and "*young tree*," instead of *yew-trees*, and *yew-tree*. RITSON.

A passage in Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose*, ver. 51. &c. will support the present reading, and show the propriety of Shakspeare's comparison.

STEEVENS.

⁵ To inherit, in the language of Shakspeare's age, is to possess.

MALONE.

⁶ The first of these lines I do not understand. The old folio gives no help; the passage is there, *Which one more view*. I can offer nothing better than this:

Within your view of many, mine, being one,

May stand in number, &c. JOHNSON.

A very slight alteration will restore the clearest sense to this passage, Shakspeare might have written the lines thus:

Search among view of many: mine, being one,

May stand in number though in reckoning none.

i. e. *Amongst the many you will view there, search for one that will please you. Choose out of the multitude.* This agrees exactly with what he had already said to him:

"—Hear all, all see,

"And like her most, whose merit most shall be."

My daughter (he proceeds) will, it is true, be one of the number, but her beauty can be of no reckoning (i. e. estimation) among those whom you will

s. e.

Come, go with me;—Go, firrah, trudge about
Through fair Verona; find those persons out,
Whose names are written there, [*gives a paper.*] and to
them say,
My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.

[*Exeunt CAPULET and PARIS.*]

Serv. Find them out, whose names are written here? It is written—that the shoemaker should meddle with his yard, and the tailor with his last, the fisher with his pencil, and the painter with his nets; but I am sent to find those persons, whose names are here writ, and can never find what names the writing person hath here writ. I must to the learned:—In good time.

Enter BENVOLIO and ROMEO.

Ben. Tut, man, one fire burns out another's burning,
One pain is lessen'd by another's anguish;
Turn giddy, and be holp by backward turning;
One desperate grief cures with another's languish:
Take thou some new infection to thy eye,
And the rank poison of the old will die.

Rom. Your plantain leaf is excellent for that.⁶

Ben.

See here. *Reckoning for estimation*, is used before in this very scene:

“Of honourable *reckoning* are you both.” STEEVENS.

This passage is neither intelligible as it stands, nor do I think it will be rendered so by Steevens's amendment.—“To search amongst view of many,” is neither sense nor English

The old folio, as Johnson tells us, reads

Which one more view of many—

And this leads us to the right reading, which I should suppose to have been this:—

Whilst on more view of many, mine being one, &c.

With this alteration the sense is clear, and the deviation from the folio very trifling. M. MASON.

⁶ Tackius tells us, that a toad, before she engages with a spider, will fortify herself with some of this plant; and that, if she comes off wounded, she cures herself afterwards with it. DR. GREY.

In *The Case is Alter'd*, by Ben Jonson, 1609, a fellow who has had his head broke, says: “’Tis nothing, a fillip, a device: fellow Juniper, prithee get me a *plantain*.”

The plantain leaf is a blood-stauncher, and was formerly applied to green wounds. STEEVENS.

Ben. For what, I pray thee?

Rom. For your broken shin.

Ben. Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

Rom. Not mad, but bound more than a madman is :
Shut up in prison, kept without my food,
Whipp'd, and tormented, and—Good e'en, good fellow.

Serv. God gi' good e'en.—I pray, fir, can you read?

Rom. Ay, mine own fortune in my misery.

Serv. Perhaps you have learnt it without book :
But I pray, can you read any thing you see?

Rom. Ay, if I know the letters, and the language.

Serv. Ye say honestly ; Rest you merry !

Rom. Stay, fellow : I can read. [reads.

*Signior Martino, and his wife and daughters ; County An-
felme, and his beauteous sisters ; The lady widow of Vitruvio ;
Signior Placentio, and his lovely nieces ; Mercutio, and his
brother Valentine ; Mine uncle Capulet, his wife, and daugh-
ters ; My fair niece Rosaline ; Livia, Signior Valentio, and
his cousin Tybalt ; Lucio, and the lively Helena.*

A fair assembly ; [gives back the note.] Whither should they
come ?

Serv. Up.

Rom. Whither ?

Serv. To supper ; ⁷ to our house.

Rom. Whose house ?

Serv. My master's.

Rom. Indeed, I should have ask'd you that before.

Serv. Now I'll tell you without asking : My master is
the great rich Capulet ; and if you be not of the house of
Montagues, I pray, come and crush a cup of wine ⁸. Rest
you merry. [Exit.

Ben. At this same ancient feast of Capulet's

Sups the fair Rosaline, whom thou so lov'st ;

With

⁷ The words *to supper* are in the old copies annexed to the preceding speech. They undoubtedly belong to the servant, to whom they were transferred by Mr. Theobald. MALONE.

⁸ This cant expression seems to have been once common among low people. I have met with it often in the old plays. We still say, incant language—to crack a bottle. STEEVENS.

With all the admired beauties of Verona:
Go thither; and, with unattainted eye,
Compare her face with some that I shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

Rom. When the devout religion of mine eye
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires!
And these,—who, often drown'd, could never die,—
Transparent hereticks, be burnt for liars!

One fairer than my love! the all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match, since first the world begun.

Ben. Tut! you saw her fair, none else being by,
Herself pois'd with herself in either eye:
But in those crystal scales, let there be weigh'd
Your lady's love against some other maid⁹
That I will show you, shining at this feast,
And she shall scant show well, that now shows best.

Rom. I'll go along, no such sight to be shown.
But to rejoice in splendour of mine own. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Room in Capulet's House.

Enter Lady CAPULET and Nurse.

La. Cap. Nurse, where's my daughter? call her forth to me.

Nurse. Now, by my maiden-head,—at twelve year old,—
I bade her come.—What, lamb! what, lady-bird!
God forbid!—where's this girl?—what, Juliet!

Enter JULIET.

Jul. How now, who calls?

Nurse.

Your mother.

Jul.

Madam, I am here.

What is your will?

La. Cap. This is the matter:—Nurse, give leave awhile,
We must talk in secret.—Nurse, come back again;
I have remember'd me, thou shalt hear our counsel.
Thou know'st, my daughter's of a pretty age.

Nurse.

⁹ *Your lady's love* is the love you bear to your lady, which in our language is commonly used for the lady herself. *HEATH.*

Nurse. 'Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

La. Cap. She's not fourteen.

Nurse. I'll lay fourteen of my teeth,
And yet to my teen ² be it spoken, I have but four,—
She is not fourteen: How long is it now
To Lammas-tide?

La. Cap. A fortnight, and odd days.

Nurse. Even or odd, of all days in the year,
Come Lammas-eve at night, shall she be fourteen;
Susan and she—God rest all Christian souls!
Were of an age.—Well, Susan is with God;
She was too good for me: But as I said,
On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen;
That shall she, marry: I remember it well.
'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years;³
An she was wean'd,—I never shall forget it,—
Of all the days of the year, upon that day:
For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,
Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall,
My lord and you were then at Mantua:—
Nay, I do bear a brain:⁴—but, as I said,
When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple
Of my dug, and felt it bitter, pretty fool!
To see it tetchy, and fall out with the dug.
Shake, quoth the dove-house: 'twas no need, I trow,
To bid me trudge.

And

² To my sorrow. JOHNSON.

This old word is introduced by Shakspeare for the sake of the jingle between *teen* and *four*, and *fourteen*. STEEVENS.

³ But how comes the nurse to talk of an *earthquake* upon this occasion? There is no such circumstance, I believe, mentioned in any of the novels from which Shakspeare may be supposed to have drawn his story; and therefore it seems probable, that he had in view the earthquake, which had really been felt in many parts of England in his own time, viz. on the 6th of April, 1580. [See *Stowe's Chronicle*, and *Gabriel Harvey's* letter in the preface to *Spenser's works*, edit. 1679.] If so, one may be permitted to conjecture, that *Romeo and Juliet*, or this part of it at least, was written in 1591; after the 6th of April, when the *eleven years since the earthquake* were completed; and not later than the middle of July, a *fortnight and odd days* before *Lammas-tide*. TYRWHITT.

⁴ That is, I have a perfect remembrance or recollection. REED.

And since that time it is eleven years :

For then she could stand alone ; nay, by the rood,
She could have run and waddled all about.

For even the day before, she broke her brow :

And then my husband—God be with his soul !

'A was a merry man : took up the child :

Yea, quoth he, *dost thou fall upon thy face ?*

Thou wilt fall backward, when thou hast more wit ;

Wilt thou not, Jule ? and, by my holy-dam,

The pretty wretch left crying, and said—*Ay :*

To see now, how a jest shall come about !

I warrant, an I should live a thousand years,

I never should forget it ; *Wilt thou not Jule ?* quoth he :

And, pretty fool, it stinted ;⁵ and said—*Ay :*

La. Cap. Enough of this ; I pray thee, hold thy peace.

Nurse. Yes, madam ; yet I cannot choose but laugh,

To think it should leave crying, and say—*Ay :*

And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow

A bump as big as a young cockrel's stone ;

A par'lous knock ; and it cried bitterly.

Yea, quoth my husband, *fall'st upon thy face ?*

Thou wilt fall backward, when thou com'st to age ;

Wilt thou not, Jule ? it stinted, and said—*Ay.*

Jul. And stint thou too, I pray thee, nurse, say I.

Nurse. Peace I have done. God mark thee to his grace !

Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nurs'd :

An I might live to see thee married once,

I have my wish.

La. Cap. Marry, that marry is the very theme
I came to talk of :—Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your disposition to be married ?

Jul. It is an honour⁶ that I dream not of.

Nurse. An honour ! were not I thine only nurse,

I'd

⁵ i. e. it stopped, it forbore from weeping. STEEVENS.

⁶ The first quarto reads *honour* ; the folio *bour*. I have chosen the reading of the quarto.

The word *bour* seems to have nothing in it that could draw from the Nurse that applause which she immediately bestows. The word *honour* was likely to strike the old ignorant woman, as a very elegant and discreet word for the occasion. STEEVENS.

I'd say, thou had'st suck'd wisdom from thy teat.

La. Cap. Well, think of marriage now; younger than you,
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,

Are made already mothers: by my count,

I was your mother much upon these years

That you are now a maid. Thus then, in brief;—

The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

Nurse. A man, young lady! lady, such a man,
As all the world—Why, he's a man of wax.⁷

La. Cap. Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

*Nurse.*⁸ Nay, he's a flower; in faith a very flower.

La. Cap. What say you?⁹ can you love the gentleman?
This night you shall behold him at our feast:

Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,

And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;

Examine every married lineament,

And see how one another lends content;

And what obscur'd in this fair volume lies,

Find written in the margin of his eyes.²

This precious book of love, this unbound lover,

To beautify him, only lacks a cover:³

The

⁷ Well made, as if he had been modelled in wax, as Mr. Steevens by a happy quotation has explained it. "When you, Lydia, praise the waxen arms of Telephus," (says, Horace,) [*Waxen*, well shaped, fine turned:]

"With passion swells my fervid breast,

"With passion hard to be suppress."

Dr. Bentley changes *cerea* into *lactea*, little understanding that the praise was given to the shape, not to the colour. S. W.

⁸ After this speech of the Nurse, Lady Capulet in the old quarto says only:

"Well, Juliet, how like you of Paris' love?"

She answers, "I'll look to like," &c. and so concludes the scene, without the intervention of that stuff to be found in the later quartos and the folio. STEEVENS.

⁹ This ridiculous speech is entirely added since the first edition.

POPE.

² The comments on ancient books were always printed in the margin. So *Horatio* in *Hamlet* says: "—I knew you must be edify'd by the margin," &c. STEEVENS.

³ This ridiculous speech is full of abstruse quibbles. The *unbound* lover, is a quibble on the *binding* of a *book*, and the *binding* in marriage; and

The fish lives in the sea ;⁴ and 'tis much pride,
 For fair without the fair within to hide :
 That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,
 That in gold clasps locks in the golden story ;⁵
 So shall you share all that he doth possess,
 By having him, making yourself no less.

Nurse. No less ? nay, bigger ; women grow by men.

La. Cap. Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love ?

Jul. I'll look to like, if looking liking move :
 But no more deep will I endart mine eye,
 Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the guests are come, supper served up,
 you call'd, my young lady ask'd for, the nurse cursed in
 the pantry, and every thing in extremity. I must hence to
 wait ; I beseech you, follow straight.

La. Cap. We follow thee.—Juliet, the county stays.

Nurse. Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days. [*Exeunt.*

and the word *cover* is a quibble on the law phrase for a married woman,
 who is styled a *femme couverte* in law French. M. MASON.

⁴ i. e. is not yet caught. Fish-skin covers to books anciently were
 not uncommon. Such is Dr. Farmer's explanation of this passage ; and
 it may receive some support from what *Ænobarbus* says in *Antony and*
Cleopatra : " The tears *live* in an onion, that should water this sorrow."

STEEVENS.

The purport of the remainder of this speech, is to show the advantage
 of having a handsome person to cover a virtuous mind. It is evident
 therefore, that instead of " the fish lives in the sea," we should read,
 " the fish lives in the shell." For the *sea* cannot be said to be a beauti-
 ful cover to a fish, though a *shell* may.—I believe, that by the *golden*
story, is meant no particular legend, but any valuable writing.

M. MASON.

⁵ The *golden story* is perhaps the *golden legend*, a book in the dark ages
 of popery much read, and doubtless often exquisitely embellished, but of
 which Canus, one of the popish doctors, proclaims the author to have
 been *homo ferrei oris, plumbei cordis*. JOHNSON.

The poet may mean nothing more than to say, that those books are
 most esteemed by the world, where *valuable contents* are embellished by as
valuable binding. STEEVENS.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

A Street.

Enter ROMEO, MERCUTIO,⁶ BENVOLIO, *with five or six Maskers, Torch-bearers, and Others.*

Rom. What, shall this speech be spoke for our excuse?
Or shall we on without apology?

Ben. The date is out of such prolixity;⁷
We'll have no Cupid hood-wink'd with a scarf,
Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,⁸
Scaring the ladies like a crow-keeper;⁹

Nor

⁶ Shakspeare appears to have formed this character on the following slight hint in the original story: "—another gentleman, called *Mercutio*, which was a courtlike gentleman, very wel beloved of all men, and by reason of his pleasant and curteous behavior was in al companies wel inter-tained." *Painter's Palace of Pleasure*, tom. ii. p. 221. STEEVENS.

⁷ i. e. *Masks* are now out of fashion. That Shakspeare was an enemy to these fooleries, appears from his writing none; and that his plays dis-credited such entertainments, is more than probable. WARBURTON.

The diversion going forward at present is not a *masque* but a *masquerade*. In Henry VIII. where the king introduces himself to the entertainment given by Wolsey, he appears, like Romeo and his companions, in a *mask*, and sends a messenger before, to make an apology for his intrusion. This was a custom observed by those who came uninvited, with a desire to conceal themselves for the sake of intrigue, or to enjoy the greater freedom of conversation. Their entry on these occasions was always pre-faced by some speech in praise of the beauty of the ladies, or the generosity of the entertainer; and to the *prolixity* of such introductions, I believe Romeo is made to allude.

In the accounts of many entertainments given in reigns antecedent to that of Elizabeth, I find this custom preserved. Of the same kind of masquerading, see a specimen in *Timon*, where Cupid precedes a troop of ladies with a speech. STEEVENS.

Shakspeare has written a *masque* which the reader will find introduced in the 4th act of *The Tempest*. It would have been difficult for the reverend annotator to have proved they were discontinued during any period of Shakspeare's life. PERCY.

⁸ The *Tartarian* bows, as well as most of those used by the Asiatic nations, resemble in their form the old Roman or Cupid's bow, such as we see on medals and bas reliefs. Shakspeare used the epithet to distinguish it from the English bow, whose shape is the segment of a circle.

DOUCE.

⁹ The word *crow-keeper* is explained in *King Lear*, Act IV. sc. vi.

JOHNSON.

Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke
After the prompter, for our entrance :
But, let them measure us by what they will,
We'll measure them a measure,² and be gone.

Rom. Give me a torch,³—I am not for this ambling;
Being but heavy, I will bear the light.

Mer. Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

Rom. Not I; believe me : you have dancing shoes,
With nimble soles : I have a soul of lead,
So stokes me to the ground, I cannot move.

Mer. You are a lover : borrow Cupid's wings,
And soar with them above a common bound.

Rom. I am too sore empierced with his shaft,
To soar with his light feathers ; and so bound,
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe :
Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

Mer. And, to sink in it, should you burden love ;⁴
Too great oppression for a tender thing.

Rom.

² i. e. a dance. MALONE.

³ The character which Romeo declares his resolution to assume, will be best explained by a passage in *Westward Hoe*, by Decker and Webster, 1607 : " He is just like a *torch-bearer* to maskers ; he wears good cloaths, and is ranked in good company, but he doth nothing." A *torch-bearer* seems to have been a constant appendage on every troop of masks.

Before the invention of chandeliers, all rooms of state were illuminated by flambeaux which attendants held upright in their hands. This custom is mentioned by Froissart, and other writers who had the merit of describing every thing they saw.

To *bald a torch*, however, was anciently no degrading office. Queen Elizabeth's Gentlemen-Pensioners attended her to Cambridge, and *bald torches* while a play was acted before her in the Chapel of King's College, on a Sunday evening.

At an entertainment also, given by Louis XIV. in 1664, no less than 200 valets-de-pied were thus employed. STEEVENS.

King Henry VIII. when he went masked to Wolfey's palace (now Whitehall,) had sixteen torch-bearers. MALONE.

⁴ i. e. by sinking in it, you should, or would, burden love. Mr. Heath, on whose suggestion a note of interrogation has been placed at the end of this line in the late editions, entirely misunderstood the passage. Had he attended to the first two lines of Mercutio's next speech, he would have seen what kind of burdens he was thinking of.

MALONE.

Rom. Is love a tender thing? it is too rough,
Too rude, too boist'rous; and it pricks like thorn.

Mer. If love be rough with you, be rough with love;
Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.—
Give me a case to put my visage in :

[Putting on a mask.

A visor for a visor!—what care I,
What curious eye doth quote deformities? ⁵
Here are the beetle-brows, shall blush for me.

Ben. Come, knock, and enter; and no sooner in,
But every man betake him to his legs.

Rom. A torch for me: let wantons, light of heart,
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels; ⁶
For I am proverb'd with a grandfire phrase, ⁷—
I'll be a candle-holder, and look on,—
The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done. ⁸

Mer.

⁵ To quote is to observe. So, in *Hamlet*:

“I am sorry, that with better heed and judgement

“I had not quoted him.” STEEVENS.

⁶ It has been already observed, that it was anciently the custom to strew rooms with *rushes*, before carpets were in use. So *Hentzner* in his *Itinerary*, speaking of *Queen Elizabeth's* presence-chamber at Greenwich, says: “The floor, after the English fashion, was strewed with *bay*,” meaning *rushes*. STEEVENS.

Shakspeare, it has been observed, gives the manners and customs of his own time to all countries and all ages. It is certainly true; but let it always be remembered that his contemporaries offended against propriety in the same manner. MALONE.

⁷ The proverb which *Romeo* means, is contained in the line immediately following: *To hold the candle*, is a very common proverbial expression for being an idle spectator. Among Ray's proverbial sentences, is this,—“A good candle-holder proves a good gamester.” STEEVENS.

The proverb to which *Romeo* refers, is rather that alluded to in the next line but one.

It appears from a passage in one of the small collections of Poetry, entitled *Drolleries*, of which I have lost the title, that “Our sport is at the best,” or at the fairest, meant, *we have had enough of it*. Hence it is that *Romeo* says, “I am done.”

Dun is the mouse, I know not why, seems to have meant, *Peace; be still!* and hence it is said to be “the constable's own word;” who may be supposed to be employed in apprehending an offender, and afraid of alarming him by any noise. MALONE.

⁸ An allusion to an old proverbial saying, which advises to give over when the game is at the fairest. RITSON.

Mer. Tut! dun's the mouse, the constable's own word :⁹
If thou art dun, we'll draw thee from the mire²

Of

This is equivalent to phrases in common use—*I am done for, it is over with me.* *Done* is often used in a kindred sense by our author.

STEEVENS.

⁹ This poor obscure stuff should have an explanation in mere charity. It is an answer to these two lines of Romeo :

“ For I am proverb'd with a grandfire phrase ;—and—

“ The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.”

Mercutio, in his reply, answers the last line first. The thought of which, and of the preceding, is taken from gaming. *I'll be a candle-bolder* (says Romeo) *and look on.* It is true, If I could play myself, I could never expect a fairer chance than in the company we are going to: but, alas! *I am done.* I have nothing to play with: I have lost my heart already. Mercutio catches at the word *done*, and quibbles with it, as if Romeo had said, The ladies indeed are *fair*, but I am *dun*, i. e. of a dark complexion. And so replies, *Tut! dun's the mouse*; a proverbial expression of the same import with the French, *La nuit tous les chats sont gris*: as much as to say, You need not fear, night will make all your complexions alike. And because Romeo had introduced his observations with,

I am proverb'd with a grandfire phrase,

Mercutio adds to his reply, *the constable's own word*: as much as to say, If you are for old proverbs, I'll fit you with one; 'tis *the constable's own word*; whose custom was, when he summoned his watch, and assigned them their several stations, to give them what the soldiers call, *the word*. But this night-guard being distinguished for their pacifick character, the constable, as an emblem of their harmless disposition, chose that domestic animal for his *word*, which, in time, might become proverbial.

WARBURTON.

² A proverbial saying, used by Mr. Thomas Heywood, in his play, intitled *The Dutchess of Suffolk*, Act III. Dr. GREY.

Draw dun (a common name, as Mr. Douce observes, for a cart-horse) *out of the mire*, seems to have been a game. In an old collection of Satyres, Epigrams, &c. I find it enumerated among other pastimes.

Dun's the mouse is a proverbial phrase, which I have likewise met with frequently in the old comedies; but of this cant expression I cannot determine the precise meaning. STEEVENS.

Dun out of the mire was the name of a tune, and to this sense Mercutio may allude when Romeo declines dancing. *Taylor in a Navy of Land ships* says, “ Nimble-heel'd mainers (like so many dancers) capring in the pumpes and vanities of this sinfull world, sometimes a Morisca or Trenchmore of forty miles long, to the tune of *duste my deare*, dirty come thou to me, *Dun out of the mire*, or I wayle in woe and plunge in paine: all these dances have no other musicke.” HOLT WHITE.

These

Of this (save reverence) love ³ wherein thou stick'st
Up to the ears.—Come, we burn day-light, ho. ⁴

Rom. Nay, that's not so.

Mer. I mean, fir, in delay
We waste our lights in vain, like lamps by day.
Take our good meaning; for our judgement fits
Five times in that, ere once in our five wits.

Rom. And we mean well, in going to this mask;
But 'tis no wit to go.

Mer. Why, may one ask?

Rom. I dreamt a dream to night.

Mer. And so did I.

Rom. Well, what was yours?

Mer. That dreamers often lie.

Rom. In bed, asleep, while they do dream things true.

Mer. O, then, I see, queen Mab hath been with you.

She

These passages serve to prove that Dr. Warburton's explanation is ill founded, without tending to explain the real sense of the phrase, or showing why it should be *the constable's own word*. M. MASON.

“The cat is grey,” a cant phrase, somewhat similar to “Dun's the mouse,” occurs in *King Lear*. But the present application of Mercutio's words will, I fear, remain in hopeless obscurity. STEEVENS.

³ [The folio—*Or save your reverence &c.*] The word *or* obscures the sentence; we should read—*O ! for or love*. Mercutio having called the affection with which Romeo was entangled by so disrespectful a word as *mire*, cries out,

O ! save your reverence, love. JOHNSON.

This passage is not worth a contest; and yet if the conjunction *or* were retained, the meaning appears to be:—“We'll draw thee from the mire (says he) *or rather* from this love wherein thou stick'st.”

Dr. Johnson has imputed a greater share of politeness to Mercutio than he is found to be possessed of in the quarto, 1597. Mercutio, as he passes through different editions,

“Works himself clear, and as he runs refines.”

STEEVENS.

I have followed the first quarto, 1597, except that it has *sur-reverence*, instead of *save-reverence*. It was only a different mode of spelling the same word; which was derived from the Latin, *salva reverentia*. See Blount's *Glossograph*. 8vo. 1681, in v. *sa-reverence*. MALONE.

⁴ To *burn daylight* is a proverbial expression, used when candles, &c. are lighted in the day time. STEEVENS.

She is the fairies' midwife;⁵ and she comes
 In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
 On the fore finger of an alderman,⁶
 Drawn with a team of little atomies⁷
 Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep:
 Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs;
 The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;
 The traces, of the smallest spider's web;
 The collars, of the moonshine's watry beams:
 Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash, of film:
 Her waggoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
 Not half so big as a round little worm
 Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid:
 Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,

Made

⁵ The *fairies' midwife* does not mean the midwife to the fairies, but that she was the person *among* the fairies, whose department it was to deliver the fancies of sleeping men of their dreams, those *children of an idle brain*. When we say the *king's judges*, we do not mean persons who are to judge the king, but persons appointed by him to judge his subjects. STEEVENS.

I apprehend, and with no violence of interpretation, that by "the fairies' midwife," the poet means, *the midwife among the fairies*, because it was her peculiar employment to steal the new-born babe in the night, and to leave another in its place. The poet here uses her *general* appellation, and character, which yet has so far a proper reference to the present train of fiction, as that her illusions were practised on persons in bed or asleep; for she not only haunted women in childbed, but was likewise the incubus or nightmare: Shakspeare, by employing her here, alludes at large to her midnight pranks performed on sleepers; but denominates her from the most notorious one, of her personating the drowsy midwife, who was insensibly carried away into some distant water, and substituting a new birth in the bed or cradle. It would clear the appellation to read the *fairy midwife*.—The poet avails himself of Mab's appropriate province, by giving her this nocturnal agency. T. WARTON.

⁶ The quarto, 1597, reads, *of a burgo-master*, The alteration was probably made by the poet himself, as we find it in the succeeding copy, 1599: but in order to familiarize the idea, he has diminished its propriety. In the pictures of *burgo-masters*, the ring is generally placed on the forefinger; and from a passage in *The First Part of Henry IV.* we may suppose the citizens in Shakspeare's time to have worn this ornament on the thumb. So again, Glapthorne, in his comedy of *Wit in a Constable*, 1639: "— and an *alderman*, as I may say to you, he has no more wit than the rest o' the bench; and that lies in his *thumb ring*." STEEVENS.

⁷ *Atomy* is no more than an obsolete substitute for *atom*. STEEVENS.

Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
Time out of mind the fairies' coach-makers.
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love:
On courtiers' knees, that dream on court'ies straight:
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees:
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream;
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
Because their breaths with sweet-meats⁸ tainted are.
Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's⁹ nose,
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit:

And

⁸ i. e. kissing-comfits. These artificial aids to perfume the breath, are mentioned by Falstaff in the last act of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

MALONE.

⁹ Mr. Pope reads—*lawyer's* nose. STEEVENS.

The old editions have it—*courtier's* nose; and this undoubtedly is the true reading: and for these reasons: First, in the new reading there is a vicious repetition in this fine speech; the same thought having been given in the foregoing line:

“O'er *lawyers'* fingers, who straight dream on fees:”

Nor can it be objected that there will be the same fault if we read *courtiers'*, it having been said before:

“On *courtiers'* knees, that dream on court'ies straight;”

because they are shown in two places under different views: in the first, their *foppery*; in the second, their *rapacity* is ridiculed. Secondly, in our author's time, a court-solicitation was called, simply a *suit*, and a process, a *suit at law*, to distinguish it from the other. “The King” (says an anonymous contemporary writer of the life of Sir William Cecil) “called him [Sir William Cecil] and after long talk with him, being much delighted with his answers, willed his father to FIND [i. e. to-smell out] A SUIT for him. Whereupon he became SUITER for the reversion of the Custos-brevium office in the Common Pleas; which the king willingly granted, it being the first SUIT he had in his life.” Indeed our poet has very rarely turned his satire against *lawyers* and *law proceedings*, the common topick of later writers: for, to observe it to the honour of the English judicatures, they preserved the purity and simplicity of their first institution, long after chicane had over-run all the other laws of Europe. WARBURTON.

In these lines Dr. Warburton has very justly restored the old reading, *courtier's* nose, and has explained the passage with his usual learning; but I do not think he is so happy in his endeavour to justify Shakspeare from the charge of a *vicious repetition* in introducing the *courtier* twice. The second folio, I observe, reads:

K. 5.

On

And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig's tail,
 Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,
 Then dreams he of another benefice :
 Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
 And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
 Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,²
 Of healths five fathom deep;³ and then anon
 Drums in his ear ; at which he starts, and wakes ;
 And, being thus frightened, swears a prayer or two,
 And sleeps again. This is that very Mab,
 That plats the manes of horses in the night ;
 And bakes the elf-locks ⁴ in foul sluttish hairs,

Which,

On *counties* knees——
 which has led me to conjecture, that the line ought to be read thus :

On *counties* knees, that dream on courties straight :

Counties I understand to signify *noblemen* in general. Paris, who, in one place, I think, is called *earl*, is most commonly styled the *county* in this play.

The *Countie Egmond* is so called more than once in Holinshed, p. 1150, and in the Burleigh papers, Vol. I. p. 204. See also p. 7. The *Countie* Palatine Lowys. However, perhaps, it is as probable that the repetition of the *courtier*, which offends us in this passage, may be owing (not to any error of the press, but) to the players having jumbled together the varieties of several editions, as they certainly have done in other parts of the play. TYRWHITT

² — *Spanish blades,*] A sword is called a toledo, from the excellence of the Toletan steel. So Grotius :

Gladius Toletanus.

“ Unda Tagi non est uno celebranda metallo ;

“ Utilis in cives est ibi lamina suos.” JOHNSON.

In the passage quoted from Grotius, *alio* has been constantly printed instead of *uno*, which makes it nonsense ; the whole point of the couplet depending on that word. I have corrected it from the original.

MALONE.

³ *Of healths five fathom deep ;*] So, in *Westward Ho*, by Decker and Webster, 1607 : “ —troth, fir, my master and fir Goslin are guzzling ; they are dabbling together *fathom deep*. The knight has drunk so much *health* to the gentleman yonder, on his knees, that he hath almost lost the use of his legs.” MALONE.

⁴ *And bakes the elf-locks &c.*] This was a common superstition ; and seems to have had its rise from the horrid disease called the Plica Polonica.

WARBURTON.

So

ROMEO AND JULIET.

3

Which, once untangled, much misfortune bodes.
This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,
That presses them, and learns them first to bear,
Making them women of good carriage.
This, this is she—

Rom. Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace;
Thou talk'st of nothing.

Mer. True, I talk of dreams;
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy;
Which is as thin of substance as the air;
And more inconstant than the wind, who woos
Even now the frozen bosom of the north,
And, being anger'd, puffs away from thence,
Turning his face to the dew-dropping south.

Ben. This wind, you talk of blows us from ourselves;
Supper is done, and we shall come too late.

Rom. I fear, too early: for my mind misgives,
Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels; and expire the term
Of a despised life, clos'd in my breast,
By some vile forfeit of untimely death:
But He, that hath the steerage of my course,
Direct my sail!⁵—On, lusty gentlemen.

Ben. Strike, drum.⁶

[*Exeunt.*]

So, in Heywood's *Iron age*, 1632:

“And when I shook these locks, now knotted all,

“As bak'd in blood,”—MALONE.

⁵ I have restored this reading from the elder quarto, as being more congruous to the metaphor in the preceding line. *Suit* is the reading of the folio. STEEVENS.

Suit is the corrupt reading of the quarto 1599, from which it got into all the subsequent copies. MALONE.

Direct my suit!] Guide the *sequel* of the adventure. JOHNSON.

⁶ Here the folio adds: *They march about the stage, and serving men come forth with their napkins.* STEEVENS.

K 6

SCENE

SCENE V.

*A Hall in Capulet's House.**Musicians waiting. Enter Servants.*

1. *Serv.* Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away?⁷ he shift a trencher!⁷ he scrape a trencher!

2. *Serv.* When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands, and they unwash'd too, 'tis a foul thing.

1. *Serv.* Away with the joint-stools, remove the court-cupboard,⁸ look to the plate:—good thou, fave me a piece of
of

⁷ *Trenchers* were still used by persons of good fashion in our author's time. In the household book of the earls of Northumberland, compiled at the beginning of the same century, it appears that they were common to the tables of the first nobility. PERCY.

To *shift a trencher* wastechanical. So, in *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, 1608, Sig. E 3: “—learne more manners, stand at your brothers backe, as to *shift a trencher* neatly,” &c. REED.

They were common even in the time of Charles I. MALONE.

They continued common much longer in many public societies, particularly in colleges and inns of court; and are still retained at Lincoln's Inn. NICHOLS.

On the books of the Stationers' Company, in the year 1554, is the following entry: “Item, payd for x dozyn of trenchers. xxi d.”

STEEVENS.

⁸ I am not very certain that I know the exact signification of *court-cupboard*. Perhaps it served the purpose of what we call at present the *side-board*. It is however frequently mentioned in the old plays: Thus in Chapman's *May-day*, 1611. “*Court-cupboards* planted with flaggons, cans, cups, beakers, &c.

Two of these *court-cupboards* are still in Stationers' Hall.

STEEVENS.

The use which to this day is made of those *cupboards* is exactly described in the above-quoted line of Chapman; to display at public festivals the *flaggons, cans, cups, beakers*, and other antique silver vessels of the company, some of which (with the names of the donors inscribed on them) are remarkably large. NICHOLS.

By “*remove the court-cupboard*,” the speaker means, I think, remove the flaggons, cups, ewers, &c. contained in it.—A *court-cupboard* was not strictly what we now call a *side-board*, but a recess fitted up with shelves to contain plate, &c. for the use of the table. It was afterwards called a *buffet*, and continued to be used to the time of Pope:

“The rich *buffet* well colour'd serpents grace,

“And gaping Tritons spew to wash your face.”

The

of marchpane;⁹ and, as thou lovest me, let the porter let in Susan Grindstone and Nell.—Anthony! and Potpan!

2. *Serv.* Ay, boy; ready.

1. *Serv.* You are look'd for, and call'd for, ask'd for, and sought for, in the great chamber.

2. *Serv.* We cannot be here and there too.—Cheerly, boys; be brisk awhile, and the longer liver take all.

[*They retire behind.*]

Enter CAPULET, &c. with the Guests and the Maskers.

1. *Cap.* Gentlemen, welcome! ladies, that have their toes

Unplagu'd with corns, will have a bout with you:

Ah ha, my mistresses! which of you all

Will now deny to dance? she that makes dainty, she,

I'll

The *side-board* was I apprehend, introduced in the present century.

MALONE.

A *court-cupboard* was a moveable; a *Beufet*, a fixture. The former was open, and made of plain oak; the latter had folding doors, and was both painted and gilded on the inside. STEEVENS.

⁹ *Marchpane* was a confection made of pistachio-nuts, almonds, and sugar, &c. and in high esteem in Shakspeare's time; as appears from the account of Queen Elizabeth's entertainment in Cambridge. It is said that the university presented Sir William Cecil, their chancellor, with two pair of gloves, a *marchpane*, and two sugar-loaves.

Peck's Desiderata Curiosa, Vol. II. p. 29. GREY.

Marchpane was a kind of sweet bread or biscuit; called by some almond-cake. *Hermolaus Barbarus* terms it *mazapanis*, vulgarly *Martius panis*. G. *marcepain* and *massepan*, It. *marzapane*, il *maçapan*. B. *marcepeyn*, i. e. *massa-pura*. But, as few understood the meaning of this term, it began to be generally though corruptly called *massepeyn*, *marcepeyn*, *martsepeyn*; and in consequence of this mistake of theirs, it soon took the name of *martius panis*, an appellation transferred afterwards into other languages. See *Junius*. HAWKINS.

Marchpane was a constant article in the deserts of our ancestors. So, in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1540: "—seeing that the issue of the table, fruits and cheese, or wafers, hypocras, and *marchpanes*, or comfytures, be brought in." See Dugdale's *Orig. Jurid.* p. 133.

In the year 1560, I find the following entry on the books of the Stationers' Company: "Item, payd for ix *marſhe paynes*, xxvi s. viii d.

Marchpanes were composed of filberts, almonds, pistachoes, pine-kernels, and sugar of roses, with a small proportion of flour. Our *macarons* are only debased and diminutive *marchpanes*. STEEVENS.

I'll swear, hath corns; Am I come near you now?
 You are welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day,
 That I have worn a visor; and could tell
 A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,
 Such as would please;—'tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone:
 You are welcome, gentlemen:—Come, musicians, play.
 A hall! a hall!² give room, and foot it, girls.

[*Musick plays, and they dance.*]

More light, ye knaves; and turn the tables up,³
 And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.—
 Ah, firrah, this unlook'd-for sport comes well.
 Nay, fit, nay, fit, good cousin Capulet;⁴
 For you and I are past our dancing days:
 How long is't now, since last yourself and I
 Were in a mask?

2. *Cap.* By'r lady, thirty years.

1. *Cap.* What, man! 'tis not so much, 'tis not so much;
 'Tis since the nuptial of Lucentio,
 Come pentecost as quickly as it will,

Some

² Such is the old reading, and the true one, though the modern editors read, *A ball! a ball!* The former exclamation occurs frequently in the old comedies, and signifies, *make room*. STEEVENS.

³ Before this phrase is generally intelligible, it should be observed that ancient tables were flat leaves, joined by hinges, and placed on tressels. When they were to be removed, they were therefore *turned up*. STEEVENS.

⁴ This *cousin* Capulet is *uncle* in the paper of invitation, but as Capulet is described as old, *cousin* is probably the right word in both places. I know not how Capulet and his lady might agree, their ages were very disproportionate; he has been past masking for thirty years, and her age, as she tells Juliet, is but eight-and-twenty. JOHNSON.

Cousin was a common expression from one kinsman to another, out of the degree of parent and child, brother and sister. Olivia, in *Twelfth Night*, constantly calls her uncle Toby *cousin*. RITSON.

Shakspeare and other contemporary writers use the word *cousin* to denote any collateral relation, of whatever degree, and sometimes even to denote those of lineal descent.

Richard III. during a whole scene calls his nephew York, *cousin*; who in his answer constantly calls him *uncle*. And the old Duchess of York in the same play calls her grandson, *cousin*:

“Why, my young *cousin*, it is good to grow.

“York, *Grandam*, one night, as we did sit at supper,” &c.

M. MASON,

Some five and twenty years ; and then we mask'd.

2. *Cap.* 'Tis more, 'tis more : his son is elder, fir ;
His son is thirty.

1. *Cap.* Will you tell me that ?
His son was but a ward two years ago.

Rom. What lady's that, who doth enrich the hand
Of yonder knight ?

Serv. I know not, fir.

Rom. O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright !
Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear :
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear !
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
And touching hers, make happy my rude hand.
Did my heart love till now ? forswear it fight !
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Tyb. This, by his voice, should be a Montague :—
Fetch me my rapier, boy :—what ! dares the slave
Come hither, cover'd with an antick face,
To fleer and scorn at our solemnity ?
Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

1. *Cap.* Why, how now, kinsman ? wherefore storm you
so ?

Tyb. Uncle, This is a Montague, our foe ;
A villain, that is hither come in spite,
To scorn at our solemnity this night.

1. *Cap.* Young Romeo is't ?

Tyb. 'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

1. *Cap.* Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone,
He bears him like a portly gentleman ;
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him,
To be a virtuous and well-governed youth :
I would not for the wealth of all this town,
Here in my house, do him disparagement :
Therefore be patient, take no note of him,
It is my will ; the which if thou respect,
Show a fair presence, and put off these frowns,

An ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.

Tyb. It fits, when such a villain is a guest;
I'll not endure him.

1. Cap. He shall be endur'd;
What, Goodman boy!—I say, he shall;—Go to;—
Am I the master here, or you? go to.
You'll not endure him!—God shall mend my soul—
You'll make a mutiny among my guests!
You will set cock-a-hoop! you'll be the man!

Tyb. Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.

1. Cap. Go to, go to,
You are a saucy boy:—Is't so, indeed?—
This trick may chance to scath you;⁵—I know what.
You must contráry me!⁶ marry, 'tis time—
Well said, my hearts:—You are a princox;⁷ go:
Be quiet, or—More light, more light, for shame!—
I'll make you quiet; What!—Cheerly, my hearts.

Tyb. Patience perforce⁸ with wilful choler meeting,
Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.
I will withdraw: but this intrusion shall,
Now seeming sweet, convert to bitter gall. [Exit.]

Rom. If I profane with my unworthy hand [to JULIET.]
This holy shrine, the gentle fine⁹ is this,—
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

Jul.

⁵ i. e. to do you an injury. STEEVENS.

⁶ The use of this verb is common to our old writers. STEEVENS.

⁷ A *princox* is a coxcomb, a conceited person. STEEVENS.

The etymology of the word *princox* may be found in Florio's Italian Dict. 1598, in v. *Pincbino*. It is rather a cockered or spoil't child, than a coxcomb. MALONE.

⁸ This expression is in part proverbial: the old adage is,

“Patience perforce is a medicine for a mad dog.” STEEVENS.

⁹ The old copies read *sin*. MALONE.

All profanations are supposed to be expiated either by some meritorious action, or by some penance undergone, and punishment submitted to. So Romeo would here say, If I have been profane in the rude touch of my hand, my lips stand ready, as two blushing pilgrims, to take off that offence, to atone for it by a sweet penance. Our poet therefore must have wrote:

——the gentle *fine* is this. WARBURTON.

Jul. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this ;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kifs.

Rom. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too ?

Jul. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

Rom. O then, dear faint, let lips do what hands do ;

They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.²

Jul. Saints do not move, though grant for prayer's fake.

Rom. Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purg'd. [*Kissing her.*]³

Jul. Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

Rom. Sin from my lips ? O trespass sweetly urg'd !

Give me my sin again.

Jul. You kiss by the book.⁴

Nurse. Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

Rom. What is her mother ?

Nurse. Marry, bachelor,

Her mother is the lady of the house,

And a good lady, and a wife, and virtuous :

I nurs'd her daughter, that you talk'd withal ;

I tell you,—he, that can lay hold of her,

Shall have the chinks.

Rom. Is she a Capulet ?

O dear account ! my life is my foe's debt.

Beth

² Juliet had said before " that palm to palm was holy palmers' kifs." She afterwards says that " palmers have lips that they must use in prayer." Romeo replies, *that the prayer of his lips was, that they might do what hands do ;* that is, that they might kifs. M. MASON.

³ Our poet here, without doubt, copied from the mode of his own time : and kissing a lady in a publick assembly, we may conclude, was not thought indecorous. In *K. Henry VIII.* he in like manner makes Lord Sands kifs Anne Boleyn, next to whom he sits at the supper given by Cardinal Wolsey. MALONE.

⁴ In *As you Like It*, we find it was usual *to quarrel by the book*, and we are told in the note, that there were books extant for good manners. Juliet here appears to refer to a third kind, containing the *art of courtship*, an example from which it is probable that Rosalind hath adduced.

HENLEY.

All that Juliet means to say is—you kifs methodically ; you offer as many reasons for kissing, as could have been found in a treatise professedly written on the subject. AMNER.

Ben. Away, begone; the sport is at the best.

Rom. Ay, so I fear; the more is my unrest.

1. Cap. Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone;
We have a trifling foolish banquet towards.⁵—

Is it e'en so? Why, then I thank you all;

I thank you, honest gentlemen; good night:—

More torches here!—Come on, then let's to bed.

Ah, firrah, [*to 2. CAP.*] by my fay, it waxes late;

I'll to my rest. [*Exeunt all but JULIET and NURSE.*]

Jul. Come hither, nurse; what is yon gentleman?

Nurse. The son and heir of old Tiberio.

Jul. What's he, that now is going out of door?

Nurse. Marry, that, I think, be young Petruchio.

Jul. What's he, that follows there, that would not dance?

Nurse. I know not.

Jul. Go, ask his name:—if he be married,
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

Nurse. His name is Romeo, and a Montague;
The only son of your great enemy.

Jul. My only love sprung from my only hate!
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!

Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathed enemy.

Nurse. What's this? what's this?

Jul. A rhyme I learn'd even now
Of one I danc'd withal. [*One calls within, JULIET.*]

Nurse. Anon, Anon:—

Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone. [*Exeunt.*]

⁵ *Towards* is ready, at hand. STEEVENS.

It appears from the former part of this scene that Capulet's company had supped. A *banquet*, it should be remembered, often meant in old times, nothing more than a collation of fruit, wine, &c. MALONE.

It appears from many circumstances that our ancestors quitted their eating-rooms as soon as they had dined, and in warm weather retired to buildings constructed in their gardens. These were called *banquetting-houses*, and here their desert was served. STEEVENS.

Enter

Enter CHORUS.⁶

Now old desire doth in his death-bed lie,
 And young affection gapes to be his heir;
 That fair,⁷ which love groan'd for, and would die,
 With tender Juliet match'd, is now not fair.
 Now Romeo is belov'd, and loves again,
 Alike bewitched by the charm of looks;
 But to his foe suppos'd he must complain,
 And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks:
 Being held a foe, he may not have access
 To breathe such vows as lovers us'd to swear;
 And she as much in love, her means much less
 To meet her new-beloved any where:
 But passion lends them power, time means to meet,
 Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet. [*Exit*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

An open Place, adjoining Capulet's Garden.

Enter ROMEO.

Rom. Can I go forward, when my heart is here?
 Turn back, dull earth, and find thy center out.
[*He climbs the wall, and leaps down within it.*]

Enter BENVOLIO, and MERCUTIO.

Ben. Romeo! my cousin Romeo!

Mer. He is wise;
 And, on my life, hath stolen him home to bed.

Ben. He ran this way, and leap'd this orchard wall:
 Call, good Mercutio.—

Mer. Nay I'll conjure too.—
 Romeo! humours! madman! passion! lover!
 Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh, Speak

⁶ This chorus added since the first edition. POPE.

The use of this chorus is not easily discovered; it conduces nothing to the progress of the play, but relates what is already known, or what the next scene will show; and relates it without adding the improvement of any moral sentiment. JOHNSON.

⁷ *Fair* it has been already observed, was formerly used as a substantive and was synonymous to beauty. MALONE.

Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied ;
 Cry but—Ah me ! couple but—love and dove ;⁸
 Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,
 One nick-name for her purblind son and heir,
 Young Adam Cupid,⁹ he that shot so trim,
 When king Cophetua lov'd the beggar-maid.²—

He

⁸ The quarto, 1597, reads *pronounce*, the two succeeding quartos and the first folio, *provaunt*: the 2d, 3d, and 4th folios *couply*; and Mr. Rowe, who printed from the last of these, formed the present reading. *Provant*, however, in ancient language, signifies *provision*. So in "The Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth, called Joan Cromwell, the wife of the late usurper, truly described and represented," 1664, p. 14: "—carrying some dainty *provant* for her own and her daughter's repast." To *provant* is to *provide*; and to *provide* is to *furnish*. "*Provant* but love and dove," may therefore mean, *furnish* but such hackney'd rhymes as these are, the trite effusions of lovers. STEEVENS.

———*pronounce but love and dove*;] Thus the first quarto, 1597. *Pronounce* in the quartos of 1599 and 1609 was made *provaunt*.

In the first folio, which appears to have been printed from the latter of these copies, the same reading is adopted. The editor of the second folio arbitrarily substituted *couply*, meaning certainly *couple*, and all the modern editors have adopted his innovation. *Provaunt*, as Mr. Steevens has observed, means *provision*; but I have never met with the verb *To Provant*, nor has any example of it been produced. I have no doubt therefore that it was a corruption, and have adhered to the first quarto.

In this very line, *love and dove*, the reading of the original copy of 1597, was corrupted in the two subsequent quartos and the folio, to—*love and day*; and *heir* in the next line corrupted into *ber*. MALONE.

Mr. Malone asks for instances of the verb *provant*. When he will produce examples of other verbs (like *reverb*, &c.) peculiar to our author, I may furnish him with the instance he desires. I am content, however, to follow the second folio. STEEVENS.

⁹ All the copies read, Abraham Cupid. The alteration was proposed originally by Mr. Upton. It evidently alludes to the famous archer, Adam Bell. REED.

² Alluding to an old ballad preserved in the first volume of Dr. Percy's *Reliques of ancient English Poetry*. STEEVENS.

"Young Adam Cupid, he that shot so trim,
 "When," &c.

This word *trim*, the first editors, consulting the general sense of the passage, and not perceiving the allusion, would naturally alter to *true*; yet the former seems the more humorous expression, and, on account of its quaintness, more likely to have been used by Mercutio. PERCY.

So *trim* is the reading of the oldest copy, and this ingenious conjecture is confirmed by it. STEEVENS.

The

He heareth not, stirreth not, he moveth not;
The ape is dead, ² and I must conjure him.—
I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,
By her high forehead, ³ and her scarlet lip,
By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,
And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,
That in thy likeness thou appear to us.

Ben. An if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

Mer. This cannot anger him: 'twould anger him
To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle
Of some strange nature, letting it there stand
Till she had laid it, and conjur'd it down;
That were some spite: my invocation
Is fair and honest, and, in his mistress' name,
I conjure only but to raise up him.

Ben. Come, he hath hid himself among those trees,
To be comforted with the humorous night: ⁴
Blind is his love, and best befits the dark.

Mer. If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.
Now will he sit under a medlar tree,
And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit,
As maids call medlars, when they laugh alone.—
Romeo, good night;—I'll to my truckle bed;
This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep:
Come, shall we go?

Ben. Go, then; for 'tis in vain
To seek him here, that means not to be found. [Exeunt.]

The ballad here alluded to, is *King Cophetua and the Beggar-maid*, or, as it is called in some old copies, *The song of a beggar and a king*.

MALONE.

² This phrase appears to have been frequently applied to young men, in our author's time, without any reference to the mimickry of that animal. It was an expression of tenderness, like *poor fool*. Nashe, in one of his pamphlets, mentions his having read Lyly's *Euphues*, when he was a little *ape* at Cambridge. MALONE.

³ It has already been observed that a high forehead was in Shakspeare's time thought eminently beautiful. MALONE.

⁴ I suppose Shakspeare means humid, the moist dewy night.

STEEVENS.

SCENE

SCENE II.

Capulet's Garden.

Enter ROMEO.

Rom. He jests at scars,⁵ that never felt a wound.—

[JULIET *appears above, at a window.*

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks!
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!—

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:

Be not her maid,⁶ since she is envious:

Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.—

It is my lady;⁷ O, it is my love:

O, that she knew she were!—

She speaks, yet she says nothing; What of that?

Her eye discourses, I will answer it.—

I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

Having some business, do intreat her eyes

To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

What if their eyes were there, they in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,

As day-light doth a lamp; her eye in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright,

That birds would sing, and think it were not night.

See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O, that I were a glove upon that hand,⁸

That

⁵ That is, Mercutio jests, whom he overheard. JOHNSON.

⁶ He (that person) jests, is merely an allusion to his having conceived himself so armed with the love of Rosalind, that no other beauty could make any impression on him. This is clear from the conversation he has with Mercutio, just before they go to Capulet's. RITSON.

⁷ Be not a votary to the moon, to Diana. JOHNSON.

⁸ This line and half I have replaced. JOHNSON.

⁸ This passage appears to have been ridiculed by Shirley in *The School of Compliments*, a comedy, 1637:

“O that I were a flea upon that lip,” &c. STEEVENS:

That I might touch that cheek!

Jul. Ah me!

Rom. She speaks:—

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this night,⁹ being o'er my head,
As is a winged messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes
Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

Jul. O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father, and refuse thy name:
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Rom. Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this? [*Aside.*]

Jul. 'Tis but thy name, that is my enemy;—
Thou art thyself though, not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose,
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes,
Without that title:—Romeo, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Rom. I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptiz'd;

Henceforth

⁹ Though all the printed copies concur in this reading, yet the latter part of the simile seems to require,

As glorious to this *sight*;—

and therefore I have ventured to alter the text so. THEOBALD.

I have restored the old reading, for surely the change was unnecessary. The plain sense is, that Juliet appeared as splendid an object in the vault of heaven obscured by darkness, as an angel could seem to the eyes of mortals, who were falling back to gaze upon him.

As glorious to this night, means *as glorious an appearance in this dark night*, &c. It should be observed, however, that the simile agrees precisely with Theobald's alteration, and not so well with the old reading.

Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Jul. What man art thou, that, thus bescreen'd in night,
So stumblest on my counsel?

Rom. By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

Jul. My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound;
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

Rom. Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.²

Jul. How cam'st thou hither, tell me? and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high, and hard to climb;
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

Rom. With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out:
And what love can do, that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.³

Jul. If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

Rom. Alack! there lies more peril in thine eye,
Than twenty of their swords; look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

Jul. I would not for the world, they saw thee here.

Rom. I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
And, but thou love me, let them find me here: ⁴

My

² *Dislike* here means *displease*. M. MASON.

³ i. e. no stop or hindrance. So, in *Hamlet*:

"By heaven I'll make a ghost of him that *lets* me." MALONE.

⁴ And so thou do but love me, I care not what may befall me: Let me be found here. Such appears to me to be the meaning.

Mr. M. Mason thinks that "*but thou love me,*" means, *unless* thou love me; grounding himself, I suppose, on the two subsequent lines. But these contain, in my apprehension, a distinct proposition. He first says, that he is content to be discovered, if he be but secure of her affection; and then adds, that death from the hands of her kinsmen would be preferable to life without her love. But, however, it must be acknowledged, has often in old English the meaning which Mr. M. Mason would here affix to it. MALONE.

Mr. M. Mason is certainly in the right. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"*But* being charg'd, we will be still by land." STEEVENS.

My life were better ended by their hate ;
Than death prorogued,⁵ wanting of thy love.

Jul. By whose direction found'st thou out this place ?

Rom. By love, who first did prompt me to enquire ;
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot ; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the furthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

Jul. Thou know'st, the mask of night is on my face ;
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek,
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
Fain would I dwell on form, fain fain deny
What I have spoke ; But farewell compliment !⁶
Dost thou love me ? I know, thou wilt say—Ay ;
And I will take thy word : yet, if thou swear'st,
Thou may'st prove false ; at lovers' perjuries,
They say, Jove laughs. O, gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully :
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo ; but, else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond ;
And therefore thou may'st think my haviour light :
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.⁷
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou over-heard'st, ere I was ware,
My true love's passion : therefore pardon me ;
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

Rom. Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops,—

Jul. O swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb, Lest

⁵ The common acceptation of *prorogue*, is to *postpone* to a distant time, which is in fact to *delay*. But I believe in this place *prorogued* means *continued* ; and that Romeo means in the language of lovers, to represent life without her as a continual death. M. MASON.

⁶ That is, farewell attention to forms. M. MASON.

⁷ *To be strange*, is to put on affected coldness, to appear shy.

Left that thy love prove likewise variable.

Rom. What shall I swear by?

Jul. Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

Rom. If my heart's dear love—

Jul. Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden;
Too like the lightening, which doth cease to be,
Ere one can say—It lightens. Sweet, good night!
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night! as sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart, as that within my breast!

Rom. O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Jul. What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

Rom. The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

Jul. I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:
And yet I would it were to give again.

Rom. Would'st thou withdraw it? for what purpose, love?

Jul. But to be frank, and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite. [*Nurse calls within.*
I hear some noise within; Dear love, adieu!
Anon, good nurse!—Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again. [*Exit.*

Rom. O blessed blessed night! I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

Re-enter JULIET, above.

Jul. Three words, dear Romeo, and good night, indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow.
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where, and what time thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,

And follow thee my lord throughout the world :

Nurse. [*Within.*] Madam.

Jul. I come, anon :—But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee,—

Nurse. [*Within.*] Madam.

Jul. By and by, I come :
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief :
To-morrow will I send.

Rom. So thrive my soul,—

Jul. A thousand times good night ! [*Exit.*]

Rom. A thousand times the worse, to want thy light.—
Love goes toward love, as school-boys from their books ;
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.
[*Retiring slowly.*]

Re-enter JULIET, above.

Jul. Hift ! Romeo, hift !—O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again !⁸
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud ;
Else would I tear the cave where echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine
With repetition of my Romeo's name.

Rom. It is my soul, that calls upon my name :
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest musick to attending ears !

Jul. Romeo !

Rom. My sweet !⁹

Jul.

⁸ The *tassel* or *tiercel* (for so it should be spelt) is the male of the *goss-hawk* ; so called : because it is a *tierce* or *third* less than the female. This is equally true of all birds of prey. In *The Booke of Falconrye*, by George Turberville, gent. printed in 1575, I find a whole chapter on the *falcon-gentle*, &c. This species of hawk had the epithet of gentle annexed to it, from the ease with which it was tamed, and its attachment to man.

STEEVENS.

It appears from the old books on this subject that certain hawks were considered as appropriated to certain ranks. The *tercel-gentle* was appropriated to the prince ; and thence, we may suppose, was chosen by Juliet as an appellation for her beloved Romeo. In an ancient treatise entitled *Hawking, Hunting and Fishing, with the true measures of blowing*, is the following passage :

“ The names of all manner of hawks, and to whom they belong :
For a PRINCE.

There is a falcon gentle, and a *tercel* gentle ; and these are for a prince.”
MALONE.

Jul. At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

Rom. At the hour of nine.

Jul. I will not fail; 'tis twenty years till then,
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

Rom. Let me stand here till thou remember it.

Jul. I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Rememb'ring how I love thy company.

Rom. And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

Jul. 'Tis almost morning, I would have thee gone;
And yet no further than a wanton's bird;
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

Rom. I would, I were thy bird.

Jul. Sweet, so would I:
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night! parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I shall say—good night, till it be morrow. [*Exit.*

Rom. Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!—
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!
Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell;
His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell. [*Exit.*

9 *My sweet!*] Mr. Malone reads—*Madam*, and justifies his choice by the following note. STEEVENS.

Thus the original copy of 1597. In the two subsequent copies and the folio we have—*My niece*. What word was intended it is difficult to say. The editor of the second folio substituted—*My sweet*. I have already shown, that all the alterations in that copy were made at random; and have therefore preserved the original word, though less tender than that which was arbitrarily substituted in its place. MALONE.

As I shall always suppose the second folio to have been corrected in many places, by the aid of better copies than fell into the hands of the editors of the preceding volume, I have in the present instance, as well as many others, followed the authority rejected by Mr. Malone.

I must add, that the cold, distant, and formal appellation—*Madam*, which has been already put into the mouth of the *Nurse*, would but ill accord with the more familiar feelings of the ardent Romeo, to whom Juliet has just promised every gratification that youth and beauty could bestow.

STEEVENS.

SCENE

SCENE III.

Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter Friar LAURENCE, with a basket.

Fri. The grey-ey'd morn smiles on the frowning night,²
 Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light;
 And flecked darkness³ like a drunkard reels
 From forth day's pathway, made by Titan's wheels:
 Now ere the sun advance his burning eye,
 The day to cheer, and night's dank dew to dry,
 I must up-fill this offer cage of ours,
 With baleful weeds, and precious-juiced flowers.⁴
 The earth, that's nature's mother, is her tomb;
 What is her burying grave, that is her womb:
 And from her womb children of divers kind
 We sucking on her natural bosom find;
 Many for many virtues excellent,
 None but for some, and yet all different.
 O, mickle is the powerful grace, that lies
 In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities:
 For nought so vile that on the earth doth live,
 But to the earth⁵ some special good doth give;
 Nor aught so good, but, strain'd from that fair use,
 Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse:

Virtue

² These four lines are here replaced, conformable to the first edition, where such a description is much more proper than in the mouth of Romeo just before, when he was full of nothing but the thoughts of his mistress. POPE.

In the folio these lines are printed twice over, and given once to Romeo, and once to the friar. JOHNSON.

The same mistake has likewise happened in the quartos, 1599, 1609, and 1637. STEEVENS.

³ *Flecked* is spotted, dappled, streaked, or variegated. In this sense it is used by Churchyard and by Lord Surrey. STEEVENS.

The word is still used in Scotland, where "a flecked cow" is a common expression. MALONE.

⁴ Shakspeare, on his introduction of Friar Lawrence, has very artificially prepared us for the part he is afterwards to sustain. Having thus easily discovered him to be a chemist, we are not surprised when we find him furnishing the draught which produces the catastrophe of the piece. I owe this remark to Dr. Farmer. STEEVENS.

⁵ *i. e.* to the inhabitants of the earth. MALONE.

Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied;
 And vice sometime's by action dignified.
 Within the infant rind of this small flower
 Poison hath residence, and medicine power:
 For this, being smelt, with that part⁶ cheers each part;
 Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.
 Two such opposed foes encamp them still
 In man as well as herbs, grace, and rude will!
 And, where the worser is predominant,
 Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

Enter ROMEO.

Rom. Good morrow, father!

Fri.

Benedicite!

What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?—
 Young son, it argues a distemper'd head,
 So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed:
 And where care lodges, sleep will never lie;
 Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
 But where unbruised youth with unstuff'd brain
 Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign:
 Therefore thy earliness doth me assure,
 Thou art up-rous'd by some distemp'rature;
 Or if not so, then here I hit it right—
 Our Romeo hath not been in bed to-night.

Rom. That last is true, the sweeter rest was mine.

Fri. God pardon sin! wast thou with Rosaline?

Rom. With Rosaline, my ghostly father? no;
 I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

Fri. That's my good son: But where hast thou been then?

Rom. I'll tell thee, ere thou ask it me again.

I have been feasting with mine enemy;
 Where, on a sudden, one hath wounded me,
 That's by me wounded; both our remedies
 Within thy help and holy physick lies:⁷
 I bear no hatred, blessed man, for lo,
 My intercession likewise steads my foe.

Fri.

⁶ i. e. with the part which smells; with the olfactory nerves.

MALONE.

⁷ This is one of the passages in which our author has sacrificed grammar to rhyme. M. MASON.

Fri. Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift;
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

Rom. Then plainly know, my heart's dear love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet:

As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine;
And all combin'd, save what thou must combine
By holy marriage: When, and where, and how,
We met, we woo'd, and made exchange of vow,
I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray
That thou consent to marry us this day.

Fri. Holy saint Francis! what a change is here!
Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
So soon forsaken? young men's love then lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.

Jesu Maria! what a deal of brine
Hath wash'd thy fallow cheeks for Rosaline!
How much salt water thrown away in waste,
To season love, that of it doth not taste!

'The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,
Thy old groans ring yet in my ancient ears;
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit
Of an old tear that is not wash'd off yet:
If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline;
And art thou chang'd? pronounce this sentence then—
Women may fall, when there's no strength in men.

Rom. Thou chidd'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

Fri. For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

Rom. And bad'st me bury love.

Fri. Not in a grave,

To lay one in, another out to have.

Rom. I pray thee, chide not: she, whom I love now,
Doth grace for grace, and love for love allow;
The other did not so.

Fri. O, she knew well,
Thy love did read by rote, and could not spell,
But come, young waverer, come go with me
In one respect I'll thy assistant be;
For this alliance may so happy prove,
To turn your households' rancour to pure love.

Rom. O, let us hence; I stand on sudden haste.⁸

Fri. Wisely, and slow; they stumble, that run fast.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Street.

Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO.

Mer. Where the devil should this Romeo be?—
Came he not home to-night?

Ben. Not to his father's; I spoke with his man.

Mer. Ah, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline,
Torments him so, that he will sure run mad.

Ben. Tybalt, the kinsman of old Capulet,
Hath sent a letter to his father's house.

Mer. A challenge on my life.

Ben. Romeo will answer it.

Mer. Any man, that can write, may answer a letter.

Ben. Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he
dares, being dared.

Mer. Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead! stabb'd
with a white wench's black eye; shot through the ear with
a love song; the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-
boy's butt-shaft;⁹ And is he a man to encounter Tybalt?

Ben. Why, what is Tybalt?

Mer. More than prince of cats,² I can tell you. O, he
is the courageous captain of compliments:³ He fights as
you

⁸ i. e. it is of the utmost consequence for me to be hasty.

STEEVENS.

⁹ A butt-shaft was the kind of arrow used in shooting at butts.

STEEVENS.

The allusion is to archery. The clout or white mark at which the
arrows are directed, was fastened by a black pin placed in the center of it.
To hit this was the highest ambition of every marksman. MALONE.

² Tybert, the name given to the cat, in the story-book of *Reynard the
Fox*. WARBURTON.

It appears to me that these speeches are improperly divided, and that
they ought to run thus:

Ben. Why, what is Tybalt more than prince of cats?

Mer. O, he's the courageous captain of compliments, &c.

M. MASON.

³ A complete master of all the laws of ceremony, the principal man in
the doctrine of punctilio:

“A man

you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance, and proportion; rests me his minim rest,⁴ one, two, and the third in your bosom: the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist; a gentleman of the very first house,—of the first and second cause;⁵ Ah, the immortal passado! the punto reverso! the hay!⁶—

Ben. The what?

Mer. The pox of such antick, lisping, affecting fantasticoes; these new tuners of accents!—By Jeshu, a very good blade!—a very tall man!—a very good whore!—Why is not this a lamentable thing, grandfire,⁷ that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these *pardonnez-moy*'s,⁸ who stand so much on the new form, that

“A man of compliments, whom right and wrong

“Have chose as umpire;”

says our author of *Don Armado*, the Spaniard, in *Love's Labour's Lost*.
STEEVENS.

⁴ A *minim* is a note of slow time in musick, equal to two crotchets.

MALONE.

⁵ i. e. one who pretends to be at the head of his family, and quarrels by the book. WARBURTON.

Tybalt cannot pretend to be the head of his family, as both Capulet and Romeo barred his claim to that elevation. “A gentleman of the first house;—of the first and second cause,” is a gentleman of the first rank, of the first eminence among these duellists; and one who understands the whole science of quarrelling, and will tell you of the first cause, and the second cause, for which a man is to fight.—The *Clown*, in *As you like it*, talks of the seventh cause in the same sense. STEEVENS.

⁶ All the terms of the modern fencing-school were originally Italian; the rapier, or small thrusting sword, being first used in Italy. The *bay* is the word *bai*, you have it, used when a thrust reaches the antagonist, from which our fencers, on the same occasion, without knowing, I suppose, any reason for it, cry out, *ba*! JOHNSON.

⁷ Humorously apostrophising his ancestors, whose sober times were unacquainted with the fopperies here complained of. WARBURTON.

⁸ *Pardonnez-moi* became the language of doubt or hesitation among men of the sword, when the point of honour was grown so delicate, that no other mode of contradiction would be endured. JOHNSON.

The old copies have—these *pardon-mees*, not, these *pardon nezmois*. Theobald first substituted the French word, without any necessity.

MALONE.

If the French phrase be not substituted for the English one, where lies the ridicule designed by Mercutio? “Their *bons*, their *bons*,” immediately following, shows that Gallic phraseology was in our poet's view. So, in *King Richard II*:

“Speak it in French, king; say, *pardonnez-moy*.” STEEVENS.

that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench?⁹ O, their
bons, their bons!²

Enter Romeo.

Ben. Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo.

Mer. Without his roe, like a dried herring:—O flesh,
flesh, how art thou fishified!—Now is he for the numbers
that Petrarch flow'd in: Laura, to his lady, was but a
kitchen-wench;—marry, she had a better love to be rhyme
her: Dido, a dowdy; Cleopatra, a gypsy; Helen, and
Hero, hildings and harlots; Thisbé, a grey eye or so,³ but
not to the purpose.—Signior Romeo, *bon jour!* there's a
French salutation to your French flop.⁴ You gave us the
counterfeit fairly last night.

Rom.

⁹ This conceit is lost, if the double meaning of the word *form* be not
attended to. FARMER.

A quibble on the two meanings of the word *form* occurs in *Love's La-
bour's Lost*, Act I. sc. i:—"sitting with her on the *form*, and taken
following her into the park; which, put together, is in manner and
form following." STEEVENS.

² Mercutio is here ridiculing those frenchified fantastical coxcombs
whom he calls *pardonnez moi's*: and therefore, I suspect here he meant to
write French too:

O, their *bon's*! their *ben's*!

i. e. how ridiculous they make themselves in crying out, *good*, and be-
ing in ecstasies with every trifle; as he had just described them before:

"——a very good blade!" &c. THEOBALD.

³ He means to allow that Thisbe had a very fine eye; for from various
passages it appears that a grey eye was in our author's time thought emi-
nently beautiful. This may seem strange to those who are not conversant
with ancient phraseology; but a grey eye undoubtedly meant what we now
denominate a blue eye.

Julia, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, speaking of her rival's eyes,
as eminently beautiful, says,

"Her eyes are grey as glass, and so are mine."

And Chaucer has the same comparison:

"—hire eyes gray as glas."

This comparison proves decisively what I have asserted; for clear and
transparent glass is not what we now call grey, but blue, or azure.

MALONE.

If grey eyes signified blue eyes, how happened it that our author, in
The Tempest, should have styled Sycorax a—blue eyed hag, instead of a
grey eyed one? STEEVENS.

⁴ Slops are large loose breeches or trousers, worn at present only by
sailors. STEEVENS.

Rom. Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?

Mer. The slip, fir, the slip;⁵ Can you not conceive?

Rom. Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great; and, in such a case as mine, a man may strain courtesy.

Mer. That's as much as to say—such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.

Rom. Meaning—to court'sy.

Mer. Thou hast most kindly hit it.

Rom. A most courteous exposition.

Mer. Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

Rom. Pink for flower.

Mer. Right.

Rom. Why, then is my pump well flower'd.⁶

Mer. Well said: Follow me this jest now, till thou hast worn out thy pump; that, when the single sole of it is worn, the jest may remain, after the wearing, solely singular.

Rom. O single-soled jest,⁷ solely singular for the singleness!

Mer.

⁵ To understand this play upon the words *counterfeit* and *slip*, it should be observed that in our author's time there was a counterfeit piece of money distinguished by the name of a *slip*. This will appear in the following instances: "And therefore he went and got him certain *slips*, which are counterfeit pieces of money, being brass, and covered over with silver, which the common people call *slips*." *Thieves falling out, True men come by their Goods*; by Robert Greene.

Other instances may be seen in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, Vol. V. p. 396. edit. 1780. REED.

It appears from a passage in Gascoigne's *Adventures of Master F. I.* no date, that a *slip* was "a piece of money which was then fallen to three halfpence, and they called them *slippes*." p. 281. STEEVENS.

⁶ Here is a vein of wit too thin to be easily found. The fundamental idea is, that Romeo wore *pinked* pumps, that is, pumps punched with holes in figures. JOHNSON.

It was the custom to wear ribbons in the shoes formed into the shape of roses, or of any other flowers. STEEVENS.

See in Mr. Steevens's edition the shoes of the *morris-dancers* in the plate at the conclusion of the first part of *King Henry IV.* with Mr. Tollet's remarks annexed to it. NICHOLS.

⁷ i. e. slight, unsolid, feeble. STEEVENS.

This epithet is here used equivocally. It formerly signified mean or contemptible; and that is one of the senses in which it is used here.

MALONE.

Mer. Come between us, good Benvolio; my wits fail.

Rom. Switch and spurs, switch and spurs; or I'll cry a match.

Mer. Nay, if thy wits run the wild-goose chase, I have done;⁸ for thou hast more of the wild-goose in one of thy wits, than, I am sure, I have in my whole five: Was I with you there for the goose?

Rom. Thou wast never with me for any thing, when thou wast not there for the goose.

Mer. I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

Rom. Nay, good goose, bite not.⁹

Mer. Thy wit is a very bitter sweetening;² it is a most sharp fauce.

Rom. And is it not well served in to a sweet goose?

Mer. O, here's a wit of cheverel,³ that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad!

Rom. I stretch it out for that word—broad: which added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.

Mer. Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature: for this driveling love

⁸ One kind of horse-race, which resembled the flight of wild-geese, was formerly known by this name. Two horses were started together; and which ever rider could get the lead, the other was obliged to follow him over whatever ground the foremost jockey chose to go. That horse which could distance the other, won the race. See more concerning this diversion in *Chambers's Dictionary* last edition under the article CHACE.

This barbarous sport is enumerated by Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, as a recreation much in vogue in his time among gentlemen. "Riding of great horses, running at ring, tilts and tournaments, horse races, wild-goose chases, are the disports of great men." p. 266. edit. 1632. fol.

This account explains the pleasantry kept up between Romeo and his gay companion. "My wits fail, says Mercutio."—Romeo exclaims briskly—"Switch and spurs, switch and spurs."—To which Mercutio rejoins, "Nay, if thy wits run the wild-goose chase," &c. HOLT WHITE.

⁹ A proverbial expression, to be found in Ray's Collection, and is used in *The Two Angry Women of Abington*, 1599. STEEVENS.

² A bitter sweetening, is an apple of that name. STEEVENS.

³ Cheverel is soft leather for gloves. JOHNSON.

Cheveril is from chevreuril, roebuck. MUSGRAVE.

love is like a great natural, that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.⁴

Ben. Stop there, stop there.

Mer. Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.⁵

Ben. Thou would'st else have made thy tale large.

Mer. O, thou art deceived, I would have made it short: for I was come to the whole depth of my tale: and meant, indeed, to occupy the argument no longer.⁶

Rom. Here's goodly geer!

Enter NURSE and PETER.

Mer. A fail, a fail, a fail!

Ben. Two, two; a shirt, and a smock.

Nurse. Peter!

Peter. Anon?

Nurse. My fan Peter.⁷

Mer. Pry'thee, do, good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan's the fairer of the two.

Nurse. God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

Mer. God ye good den,⁸ fair gentlewoman.

Nurse. Is it good den?

Mer. Tis no less, I tell you; for the bawdy hand of the dial

⁴ It has been observed by Sir J. Hawkins, in a note on *All's Well*, &c. that a *bauble* was one of the accoutrements of a licensed fool or jester. So again, in Sir W. D' Avenant's *Albovine*, 1629: "For such rich widows there love court fools, and use to play with their *baubles*." STEEVENS.

⁵ *A contrepoil*: Fr. An expression equivalent to one which we now use—"against the grain." STEEVENS.

⁶ Here we have another wanton allusion. MALONE.

⁷ The business of *Peter* carrying the *Nurse's fan*, seems ridiculous according to modern manners; but I find such was formerly the practice. In an old pamphlet called "*The Serving-man's Comfort*," 1568, we are informed, "The mistress must have one to carry her cloake and hood, another her *fanne*." FARMER.

Again, in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

"To see him walk before a lady, and to bear her fan."

Again in *Every Man out of his Humour*: "If any lady, &c. wants an upright gentleman in the nature of a gentleman-usher, &c. who can hide his face with her fan," &c. STEEVENS.

⁸ God give you a good even. The first of these contractions is common among the ancient comick writers. STEEVENS.

dial⁹ is now upon the prick of noon.

Nurse. Out upon you! what a man are you?

Rom. One, gentlewoman, that God hath made himself to mar.

Nurse. By my troth, it is well said;—For himself to mar, quoth'a?—Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

Rom. I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older when you have found him, than he was when you sought him: I am the youngest of that name, for, fault of a worse.

Nurse. You say well.

Mer. Yea, is the worst well? very well took, i'faith; wisely, wisely.

Nurse. If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with you.

Ben. She will indite him to some supper.

Mer. A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

Rom. What hast thou found?

Mer. No hare, fir;² unless a hare, fir, in a lenten pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent.

An old hare hoar,³

And an old hare hoar,

Is very good meat in lent:

But a hare that is hoar,

Is too much for a score

When it hoars ere it be spent.—

Romeo, will you come to your father's? we'll to dinner thither.

Rom.

⁹ In *The Puritan Widow*, 1607, which has been attributed to our author is a similar expression: “—the feskewe of the diall is upon the chrisse-crosse of noon.” STEEVENS.

² Mercutio having roared out, *So, bo!* the cry of the sportsmen when they start a hare, Romeo asks *what he has found*. And Mercutio answers, *No hare, &c.* The rest is a series of quibbles unworthy of explanation, which he who does not understand, needs not lament his ignorance.

JOHNSON.

So bo! is the term made use of in the field when the hare is found in her seat, and not when she is started. A. C.

³ *Hoar* or *boary*, is often used for mouldy, as things grow white from moulding. STEEVENS.

These lines appear to have been part of an old song. In the quarto, 1597, we have here this stage direction: “*He walks between them, i. e. the nurse and Peter,] and sings.*” MALONE.

Rom. I will follow you.

Mer. Farewell, ancient lady; farewell, lady, lady, lady.⁴

[*Exeunt MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO.*]

Nurse. Marry, farewell!—I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this,⁵ that was so full of his ropery?⁶

Rom. A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself talk; and will speak more in a minute than he will stand to in a month.

Nurse. An 'a speak any thing against me, I'll take him down an a' were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks; and if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none of his skains-mates.⁷—And thou must stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure?

Peter. I saw no man use you at his pleasure; if I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant you: I dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and the law on my side.

Nurse. Now, afore God, I am so vex'd, that every part about me quivers. Scurvy knave?—Pray you, sir, a word: and as I told you, my young lady bade me inquire you out; what she bade me say, I will keep to myself: but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her into a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of behaviour, as they say:
for

⁴ The burthen of an old song. STEEVENS.

⁵ The term *merchant* which was, and even now is, frequently applied to the lowest sort of dealers, seems anciently to have been used on these familiar occasions in contradistinction to *gentleman*; signifying that the person showed by his behaviour he was a low fellow.

The term *chap*, i. e. *chapman*; a word of the same import with *merchant* in its less respectable sense, is still in common use among the vulgar, as a general denomination for any person of whom they mean to speak with freedom or disrespect. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Ropery* was anciently used in the same sense as *roguery* is now. *Rope-tricks* are mentioned in another place. STEEVENS.

⁷ *None of his skains-mates* means, I apprehend, none of his cut-throat companions. MALONE.

A *skein* or *skain* was either a knife or a short dagger. By *skains-mates* the nurse means none of his loose companions who frequent the fencing-school with him, where we may suppose the exercise of this weapon was taught.

Mr. M. Mason supposes the Nurse uses *skains-mates* for *kins-mates*, and *ropery* for *roguery*. STEEVENS.

for the gentlewoman is young; and, therefore, if you should deal double with her, truly, it were an ill thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.

Rom. Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I protest unto thee, —

Nurse. Good heart! and, i'faith, I will tell her as much: Lord, lord, she will be a joyful woman.

Rom. What wilt thou tell her, nurse? thou dost not mark me.

Nurse. I will tell her, sir, — that you do protest; ⁶ which as I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer.

Rom. Bid her devise some means to come to shrift This afternoon;

And there she shall at friar Laurence's cell
Be shriv'd, and married. Here is for thy pains,

Nurse. No, truly, sir; not a penny.

Rom. Go to; I say, you shall.

Nurse. This afternoon, sir? well, she shall be there.

Rom. And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey-wall:
Within this hour my man shall be with thee;
And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair;⁷
Which to the high top-gallant⁸ of my joy
Must be my convoy in the secret night.
Farewell! — Be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains.
Farewell! — Commend me to thy mistress.

Nurse. Now God in heaven bless thee! — Hark you, sir.

Rom. What say'st thou, my dear nurse?

Nurse. Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear say —

Two

⁶ Whether the repetition of this word conveyed any idea peculiarly comick to Shakspeare's audience, is not at present to be determined. The use of it, however, is ridiculed in the old comedy of *Sir Giles Goosecap*, 1606:

“There is not the best duke's son in France dares say, *I protest*, till he be one and thirty years old at least; for the inheritance of that word is not to be possessed before.” STEEVENS.

⁷ Like stairs of rope in the tackle of a ship. JOHNSON.

A stair, for a flight of stairs, is still the language of Scotland, and was probably once common to both kingdoms. MALONE.

⁸ The *top-gallant* is the highest extremity of the mast of a ship. The expression is common to many writers. STEEVENS.

Two may keep counsel, putting one away?⁸

Rom. I warrant thee; my man's as true as steel.

Nurse. Well, fir; my mistress is the sweetest lady—Lord, lord!—when 'twas a little prating thing,—O,—there's a nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife aboard; but she, good soul, had as lieve see a toad, a very toad as see him. I anger her sometimes, and tell her that Paris is the properer man; but, I'll warrant you, when I say so, she looks as pale as any clout in the varfal world. Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?⁹

Rom. Ay, nurse; What of that? both with an R.

Nurse. Ah, mocker! that's the dog's name. R is for the dog. No; I know it begins with some other letter:² and she

⁸ This proverb, with a slight variation, has been already introduced in *Titus Andronicus*. STEEVENS.

⁹ By this question the nurse means to insinuate that Romeo's image was ever in the mind of Juliet, and that they would be married. Rosemary being conceived to have the power of strengthening the memory, was an emblem of remembrance, and of the affection of lovers, and (for this reason probably,) was worn at weddings.

That rosemary was much used at weddings, appears from many passages in the old plays. MALONE.

On a former occasion, the author of the preceding note has suspected me of too much refinement. Let the reader judge whether he himself is not equally culpable in the present instance. The Nurse, I believe, is guiltless of so much meaning as is here imputed to her question.

STEEVENS.

² It is a little mortifying, that the sense of this odd stuff, when found, should not be worth the pains of retrieving it:

“ ——— spissis indigna theatris

“ Scripta pudet recitare, & nugis addere pondus.

The *Nurse* is represented as a prating silly creature; she says, she will tell Romeo a good joke about his mistress, and asks him, whether Rosemary and Romeo do not begin both with a letter: He says, Yes, an R. She, who, we must suppose, could not read, thought he had mock'd her, and says, No, sure, I know better: our dog's name is R. yours begins with another letter. This is natural enough, and in character. R put her in mind of that sound which is made by dogs when they snarl; and therefore, I presume, she says, that is the dog's name, R in schools, being called *The dog's letter*. Ben Jonson, in his *English Grammar*, says *R is the dog's letter, and birreth in the sound*.

“ Irritata canis quod R. R. quam plurima dicat.” *Lucil.*

WARBURTON.

DE

she hath the prettiest sententious of it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it.

Rom. Commend me to thy lady.

[*Exit.*

Nurse. Ay, a thousand times.—Peter!

Pet. Anon?

Nurse. Peter, Take my fan, and go before.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Capulet's Garden.

Enter JULIET.

Jul. The clock struck nine, when I did send the nurse;
In half an hour she promis'd to return.

Perchance, she cannot meet him:—that's not so.—

O, she is lame! love's heralds should be thoughts,
Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams,

Driving

Dr. Warburton reads:—*R.* is for *Thee*? *STEEVENS.*

I believe we should read—*R* is for the *dog*. No; I know it begins with some other letter. *TYRWHITT.*

I have adopted this emendation, though *Dr. Farmer* has since recommended another which should seem equally to deserve attention. He would either omit *name* or insert *letter*. The *dog's* letter, as the same gentleman observes, is pleasantly exemplified in *Barclay's Ship of Fools*, 1578:

“ This man malicious which troubled is with wrath,

“ Nought els foundeth but the hoorse letter *R*.

“ Though all be well, yet he none aunswere hath

“ Save the *dogges* letter glowming with nar, nar.”

STEEVENS.

Erasmus in explaining the adage “*canina facundia*,” says, “*R. litera quæ in rixando prima est, canina vocatur.*” I think it is used in this sense more than once in *Rabelais*: and in *The Alchemist* *Subtle* says, in making out *Abel Drugger's* name, “And right anent him a dog snarling *er.*”

DOUCE.

Mr. Tyrwhitt's alteration is certainly superior to either *Dr. Warburton's* (*Thee*? no;) or one formerly proposed by *Dr. Johnson* (*the nonce*) not but the old reading is as good, if not better, when properly regulated;

e. g.

Ah mocker! that's the dog's name. *R* is for the—no; I know it begins with some other letter. *RITSON.*

This passage is not in the original copy of 1597. The quarto 1599, and folio read—Ah, mocker, that's the dog's name.

MALONE.

Driving back shadows over lowring hills :
 Therefore do nimble-pinion'd doves draw love,
 And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings,
 Now is the sun upon the highmost hill
 Of this day's journey ; and from nine till twelve
 Is three long hours,—yet she is not come.
 Had she affections, and warm youthful blood,
 She'd be as swift in motion as a ball ;
 My words would bandy her to my sweet love,
 And his to me ;
 But old folks, many feign as they were dead ;
 Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.

Enter Nurse and PETER.

O God, she comes !—O honey nurse, what news ?
 Hast thou met with him ? Send thy man away.

Nurse. Peter, stay at the gate. *[Exit PETER.]*

Jul. Now, good sweet nurse,—O lord ! why look'st thou
 sad ?

Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily ;
 If good, thou sham'st the musick of sweet news.
 By playing it to me with so sour a face.

Nurse. I am a weary, give me leave a while ;—
 Fye, how my bones ache ! What a jaunt have I had !

Jul. I would, thou hadst my bones, and I thy news :
 Nay, come, I pray thee, speak ;—good, good nurse,
 speak.

Nurse. Jesu, What haste ? can you not stay awhile ?
 Do you not see, that I am out of breath ?

Jul. How art thou out of breath, when thou hast
 breath

To say to me—that thou art out of breath ?
 The excuse, that thou dost make in this delay,
 Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.
 Is thy news good, or bad ? answer to that ;
 Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance :
 Let me be satisfied, Is't good or bad ?

Nurse. Well, you have made a simple choice ; you know
 not how to choose a man : Romeo ! no, nor he, though his
 face

face be better than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's; and for a hand, and a foot, and a body,—though they be not to be talk'd on, yet they are past compare: He is not the flower of courtesy,—but, I'll warrant him, as gentle as a lamb.—Go thy way, wench; serve God:—What have you dined at home?

Jul. No, no: But all this did I know before; What says he of our marriage? what of that?

Nurse. Lord, how my head akes! what a head have I! It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.

My back o't' other side,—O, my back, my back!—
Beslrew your heart, for sending me about,
To catch my death with jaunting up and down!

Jul. I'faith, I am sorry that thou art not well: Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love?

Nurse. Your love says like an honest gentleman,
And a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome,
And, I warrant, a virtuous:—Where is your mother?

Jul. Where is my mother?—why, she is within;
Where should she be? How oddly thou reply'st?

*Your love says like an honest gentleman,—
Where is your mother?*

Nurse. O, God's lady dear!
Are you so hot? Marry, come up, I trow;
Is this the poultice for my aking bones?
Henceforward do your messages yourself.

Jul. Here's such a coil;—Come, what says Romeo?

Nurse. Have you got leave to go to shrift to-day?

Jul. I have.

Nurse. Then hie you hence to friar Laurence' cell,
There stays a husband to make you a wife:
Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks,
They'll be in scarlet straight at any news.
Hie you to church; I must another way,
To fetch a ladder, by the which your love
Must climb a bird's nest soon, when it is dark:
I am the drudge, and toil in your delight;
But you shall bear the burden soon at night.

Go.

Go, I'll to dinner; hie you to the cell.

Jul. Hie to high fortune!—honest nurse, farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter Friar LAURENCE and ROMEO.

Fri. So smile the heavens upon this holy act,
That after-hours with sorrow chide us not!

Rom. Amen, amen! but come what sorrow can,
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy
That one short minute gives me in her sight:
Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
Then love-devouring death do what he dare,
It is enough I may but call her mine.

Fri. These violent delights have violent ends,
And in their triumph die; like fire and powder,
Which, as they kiss, consume: the sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness,
And in the taste confounds the appetite.
Therefore, love moderately; long love doth so;
Too swift arrives³ as tardy as too slow.

Enter JULIET.

Here comes the lady:⁴—O, so light a foot
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint:
A lover may bestride the goffomers⁵

That

³ He that travels too fast is as long before he comes to the end of his journey, as he that travels slow. Precipitation produces mishap.

JOHNSON.

⁴ However the poet might think the alteration of this scene on the whole to be necessary, I am afraid, in respect of the passage before us, he has not been very successful. The violent hyperbole of *never wearing out the everlasting flint* appears to me not only more reprehensible, but even less beautiful than the lines as they were originally written, where the lightness of Juliet's motion is accounted for from the cheerful effects the passion of love produced in her mind. STEEVENS.

⁵ The *Goffomer* is the long white filament which flies in the air in summer.

That idle in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall; so light is vanity.

Jul. Good even to my ghostly confessor.

Fri. Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

Jul. As much to him, else are his thanks too much.

Rom. Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy
Be heap'd like mine, and that thy skill be more
To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath
This neighbour air, and let rich musick's tongue
Unfold the imagin'd happiness that both
Receive in either by this dear encounter.

Jul. Conceit,⁵ more rich in matter than in words,
Braggs of his substance, not of ornament:
They are but beggars that can count their worth;
But my true love is grown to such excess,
I cannot sum up half my sum of wealth.

Fri. Come, come with me, and we will make short
work;
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone,
Till holy church incorporate two in one. [Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE I.

A publick Place.

Enter MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, Page, and Servants.

Ben. I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire;
The day is hot,⁶ the Capulets abroad,
And, if we meet, we shall not 'scape a brawl;
For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.

Mer.

⁵ Conceit here means imagination. MALONE.

⁶ It is observed, that in Italy almost all assassinations are committed during the heat of summer. JOHNSON.

In Sir Thomas Smith's *Commonwealth of England*, 1583, B. II. c. xix. p. 70, it is said, "And commonly every yeere or each second yeere in the beginning of sommer or afterwards (*for in the warme time the people for the most part be more unruly*) even in the calm time of peace, the prince with his counsell chooseth out," &c. REED.

Mer. Thou art like one of those fellows, that, when he enters the confines of a tavern, claps me his sword upon the table, and says, *God send me no need of thee!* and, by the operation of the second cup, draws it on the drawer, when, indeed, there is no need.

Ben. Am I like such a fellow?

Mer. Come, come, thou art as hot a Jack in thy mood as any in Italy; and as soon moved to be moody, and as soon moody to be moved.

Ben. And what to?

Mer. Nay, an there were two such, we should have none shortly, for one would kill the other. Thou! why thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more, or a hair less, in his beard, than thou hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other reason but because thou hast hazel eyes; What eye, but such an eye, would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat; and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle as an egg, for quarrelling. Thou hast quarrell'd with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath waken'd thy dog that hath lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet before Easter? with another, for tying his new shoes with old ribband? and yet thou wilt tutor me from quarrelling!

Ben. An I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should buy the fee-simple of my life for an hour and a quarter.

Mer. The fee-simple? O simple!

Enter TYBALT, and Others.

Ben. By my head, here comes the Capulets.

Mer. By my heel, I care not.

Tyb. Follow me close, for I will speak to them.⁸—
Gentlemen, good den: a word with one of you.

Mer.

⁷ Thou wilt endeavour to restrain me, by prudential advice, from quarrelling. MALONE.

⁸ In the original copy this line is not found, Tybalt entering alone. In that of 1599 we find this stage-direction: "Enter Tybalt, *Petruchio*, and others;" and the above line is inserted;—but I strongly suspect it to be an

Mer. And but one word with one of us? Couple it with something; make it a word and a blow.

Tyb. You will find me apt enough to that, sir, if you will give me occasion.

Mer. Could you not take some occasion without giving?

Tyb. Mercutio, thou consort'st with Romeo,—

Mer. Consort! what, dost thou make us minstrels? an thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords: here's my fiddlestick; here's that shall make you dance. 'Zounds, consort!

Ben. We talk here in the publick haunt of men: Either withdraw into some private place.

Or reason coldly of your grievances,

Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.

Mer. Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze;

I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I.

Enter ROMEO.

Tyb. Well, peace be with you, sir! here comes my man.

Mer. But I'll be hang'd, sir, if he wear your livery: Marry, go before to field, he'll be your follower; Your worship, in that sense, may call him—man.

Tyb. Romeo, the hate I bear thee, can afford No better term than this—Thou art a villain.

Rom. Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee Doth much excuse the appertaining rage To such a greeting:—Villain am I none; Therefore farewell; I see, thou know'st me not.

Tyb. Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries That thou hast done me; therefore turn, and draw.

Rom.

an interpolation; for would Tybalt's partizans suffer him to be killed without taking any part in the affray? That they do not join in it, appears from the account given by Benvolio. In the original copy Benvolio says on the entrance of Tybalt, "By my head, here comes a Capulet." Instead of the two latter words, we have in the quarto 1599, *the Capulets*.

MALONE.

Mr. Malone forgets that even in his own edition of this play, Tybalt is not killed while his partisans are on the stage. They go out with him after he has wounded Mercutio; and he himself re-enters, unattended, when he fights with Romeo. STEEVENS.

Rom. I do protest, I never injur'd thee;
But love thee better than thou canst devise,
Till thou shalt know the reason of my love:
And so, good Capulet,—which name I tender
As dearly as mine own,—be satisfied.

Mer. O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!
*A la stoccata*⁸ carries it away.—

[*Draws.*

Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

Tyb. What would'st thou have with me?

Mer. Good king of cats,⁹ nothing, but one of your nine
lives; that I mean to make bold withal, and, as you shall
use me hereafter, dry-beat the rest of the eight. Will you
pluck your sword out of his pilcher by the ears?² make haste,
lest mine be about your ears ere it be out.

Tyb. I am for you.

[*drawing.*

Rom. Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

Mer. Come, fir, your passado.

[*They fight.*

Rom. Draw, Benvolio;

Beat down their weapons :—Gentlemen, for shame

Forbear this outrage ;—Tybalt—Mercutio—

The prince expressly hath forbid this bandying

In Verona streets :—hold, Tybalt ;—good Mercutio.

[*Exeunt TYBALT and his Partizans.*

Mer. I am hurt ;—

A plague o' both the houses !—I am sped :—

Is he gone, and hath nothing?

Ben.

What, art thou hurt?

Mer. Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch ; marry, 'tis enough.

Where

Mr. Malone forgets that, even in his own edition of this play, Tybalt is not killed while his partisans are on the stage. They go out with him after he has wounded Mercutio; and he himself re-enters, unattended, when he fights with Romeo. STEEVENS.

⁸ *Stoccata* is the Italian term for a thrust or stab with a rapier.

STEEVENS.

⁹ Alluding to his name. See p. 2, n. 224. MALONE.

² We should read *pilche*, which signifies a cloke or coat of skins, meaning the scabbard. WARBURTON.

The old quarto reads *scabbard*. Dr. Warburton's explanation is, I believe, just. Nash, in *Pierce Pennyles his Supplication*, 1595, speaks of a carman in a leather *pilche*. STEEVENS.

Where is my page?—go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

[Exit Page.

Rom. Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much.

Mer. No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve: ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man.³ I am pepper'd, I warrant, for this world:—A plague o' both your houses!—'Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! a braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arithmetick!—Why, the devil, came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

Rom. I thought all for the best.

Mer. Help me into some house, Benvolio,
Or I shall faint.—A plague o' both your houses!
They have made worm's meat of me:
I have it, and soundly too:—Your houses!

[Exeunt MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO.

Rom. This gentleman, the prince's near ally,
My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt
In my behalf; my reputation stain'd
With Tybalt's slander, Tybalt, that an hour
Hath been my kinsman:—O sweet Juliet,
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate,
And in my temper soften'd valour's steel.

Re-enter BENVOLIO.

Ben. O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead;
That gallant spirit hath aspir'd the clouds,
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

Rom. This day's black fate on more days doth depend;⁴
This but begins the woe, others must end.

Re-enter

³ This jest was better in old language, than it is at present; Lidgate says, in his elegy upon Chaucer:

“My master Chaucer now is grave.” FARMER.

Again in Sir Thomas Overbury's Description of a Sexton, CHARACTERS, 1616: “At every church-style commonly there's an ale-house; where let him bee found never so idle-pated, hee is still a grave drunkard.”

MALONE.

⁴ This day's unhappy destiny *hangs over* the days yet to come. There will yet be more mischief. JOHNSON.

Re-enter Tybalt.

Ben. Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

Rom. Alive! in triumph! and Mercutio slain!

Away to heaven respective⁵ lenity,

And fire-ey'd fury be my conduct now!—

Now, Tybalt, take the villain back again,

That late thou gav'st me; for Mercutio's soul

Is but a little way above our heads,

Staying for thine to keep him company;

Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him.

Tyb. Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here,
Shalt with him hence.

Rom.

This shall determine that.

[*They fight; TYBALT falls.*]

Ben. Romeo, away, be gone!

The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain:—

Stand not amaz'd:⁶—the prince will doom thee death,

If thou art taken:—hence!—be gone!—away!

Rom. O! I am fortune's fool!⁷

Ben.

Why dost thou stay?

[*Exit ROMEO.*]

Enter Citizens, &c.

1. *Cit.* Which way ran he, that kill'd Mercutio?

Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he?

Ben. There lies that Tybalt.

1. *Cit.*

Up, fir, go with me;

I charge thee in the prince's name. obey.

*Enter Prince, attended; MONTAGUE, CAPULET, their
Wives, and others.*

Prin. Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

Ben.

⁵ Cool, considerate gentleness. *Respect* formerly signified consideration; prudential caution. MALONE.

⁶ i. e. confounded, in a state of confusion. So in *Cymbeline*: "I am amaz'd with matter." STEEVENS.

⁷ I am always running in the way of evil fortune, like the fool in the play. *Thou art death's fool*, in *Measure for Measure*. See Dr. Warburton's note. JOHNSON.

Ben. O noble prince, I can discover all
The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl:
There lies the man, slain by young Romeo,
That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

La. Cap. Tybalt, my cousin!—O my brother's child!
Unhappy fight! ah me, the blood is spill'd
Of my dear kinsman!—Prince, as thou art true,⁸
For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague.—
O cousin, cousin!

Prin. Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

Ben. Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay;
Romeo that spoke him fair, bade him bethink
How nice the quarrel⁹ was, and urg'd withal
Your high displeasure:—All this—uttered
With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bow'd—
Could not take truce with the unruly spleen
Of Tybalt deaf to peace, but that he tilts
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast;
Who, all as hot, turns deadly point to point,
And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats
Cold death aside, and with the other sends
It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity
Retorts it: Romeo he cries aloud,
Hold friends! friends, part! and, swifter than his tongue,
His agile arm beats down their fatal points,
And 'twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm
An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life
Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled:
But by and by comes back to Romeo,
Who had but newly entertain'd revenge,
And to't they go like lightning; for ere I
Could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain;
And, as he fell, did Romeo turn and fly:
This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

La. Cap. He is a kinsman to the Montague,
Affection makes him false,² he speaks not true:

Some

⁸ As thou art *just* and *upright*. JOHNSON.

⁹ How *slight*, how *unimportant*, how *petty*. So, in the last act,

“The letter was not *nice*, but full of charge,

“Of dear import.” JOHNSON.

See also Vol. VII. p. 201, n.3. MALONE.

Some twenty of them fought in this black strife,
And all those twenty could but kill one life :
I beg for justice, which thou, prince, must give ;
Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.

Prin. Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio ;
Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe ?

Mon. Not Romeo, prince, he was Mercutio's friend ;
His fault concludes but, what the law should end,
The life of Tybalt.

Prin. And, for that offence,
Immediately we do exile him hence :
I have an interest in your hates' proceeding,
My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a bleeding ;
But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine,
That you shall all repent the loss of mine :
I will be deaf to pleading and excuses ;
Nor tears, nor prayers, shall purchase out abuses,²
Therefore use none ; let Romeo hence in haste,
Else, when he's found, that hour is his last.
Bear hence this body, and attend our will :
Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in Capulet's house.

Enter JULIET.

Jul. Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phœbus' mansion ; such a waggoner
As Phaeton would whip you to the west,
And bring in cloudy night immediately.—

Spread

² The charge of falsehood on Benvolio, though produced at hazard, is very just. The author, who seems to intend the character of Benvolio as good, meant perhaps to show, how the best minds, in a state of faction and discord, are detorted to criminal partiality. JOHNSON.

³ This was probably designed as a covert stroke at the church of Rome, by which the different prices of murder, incest, and all other crimes, were minutely settled, and as shamelessly received. STEEVENS.

Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night!
 That run-away's eyes may wink;⁴ and Romeo
 Leap to these arms, untalk'd of, and unseen!—
 Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
 By their own beauties: or, if love be blind,
 It best agrees with night.—Come, civil night,⁵
 Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
 And learn me how to lose a winning match,
 Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods:
 Hood my unmann'd blood⁶ bating in my cheeks,

With

⁴ What run-aways are these, whose eyes Juliet is wishing to have stopt? Macbeth, we may remember, makes an invocation to night much in the same strain:

“ ——— Come, feeling night,

“ Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,” &c.

So Juliet would have night's darkness obscure the great eye of the day, the sun; whom considering in a poetical light as *Ææbus*, drawn in his car with fier^{ce} footed steeds, and ~~passing~~ ^{driving} through the heavens, she very properly calls him, with regard to the swiftness of his course, the *run-away*. In the like manner our poet speaks of the night in *The Merchant of Venice*:

“ For the close night doth play the *run-away*.” WARBURTON.

Mr. Heath justly observes on this emendation, that the sun is necessarily absent as soon as night begins, and that it is very unlikely that Juliet, who has just complained of his tediousness, should call him a *runaway*.” MALONE.

The construction of this passage, however elliptical or perverse, I believe to be as follows:

May that run-away's eyes wink!

Or

That run-away's eyes, may (they) wink

These ellipses are frequent in Spenser; and *that for oh! that*, is not uncommon, as Dr. Farmer observes in a note on the first scene of *The Winter's Tale*. STEEVENS.

That seems not to be the optative adverb *utinam*, but the pronoun *ista*. These lines contain no wish, but a reason for Juliet's preceding wish for the approach of *cloudy* night; for in such a night there may be no star-light to discover our stolen pleasures:

“ That run-away's eyes *may* wink, and Romeo

“ Leap to these arms, untalk'd of and unseen.”

BLACKSTONE.

⁵ Civil is grave, decently solemn. JOHNSON.

⁶ Blood yet unacquainted with man. JOHNSON.

These are terms of falconry. An *unmanned* hawk is one that is not brought

With thy black mantle; till strange-love, grown bold,⁷
 Think true love acted, simple modesty.
 Come, night!—Come, Romeo! come, thou day in night!
 For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
 Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.⁸—
 Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-brow'd night,
 Give me my Romeo: and, when he shall die,
 Take him and cut him out in little stars,
 And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
 That all the world will be in love with night,
 And pay no worship to the garish sun.⁹—
 O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
 But not possess'd it; and, though I am sold,
 Not yet enjoy'd: So tedious is this day,
 As is the night before some festival
 To an impatient child, that hath new robes,
 And may not wear them. O, here comes my nurse,

Enter NURSE, with cords.

And she brings news; and every tongue, that speaks
 But Romeo's name, speaks heavenly eloquence.—
 Now, nurse, what news? What hast thou there? the cords,
 That Romeo bade thee fetch?

Nurse.

Ay, ay, the cords.

[Throws them down.]

Jul.

brought to endure company. *Bating* (not *baiting*, as it has hitherto been printed) is fluttering with the wings as striving to fly away

To *hood* a hawk, that is, to cover its head with a hood, was an usual practice, before the bird was suffered to fly at its quarry. MALONE.

If the hawk flew with its *hood* on, how could it possibly see the object of its pursuit? The *hood* was always taken off before the bird was dismissed. STEEVENS.

⁷ This is Mr. Rowe's emendation. The old copies for *grown* have *grow*. MALONE.

⁸ The quarto 1599, and the folio—*upon*. The line is not in the first quarto. The editor of the second folio, for the sake of the metre, reads—*on* a raven's back; and so, many of the modern editors. MALONE.

I profess myself to be still one of this peccant fraternity. STEEVENS.

⁹ *Garish* is gaudy, showy. STEEVENS.

Jul. Ah me! what news! why dost thou wring thy hands?

Nurse. Ah well-a-day! he's dead, he's dead, he's dead!
We are undone, lady, we are undone!—

Alack the day!—he's gone, he's kill'd, he's dead!

Jul. Can heaven be so envious?

Nurse. Romeo can,
Though heaven cannot:—O Romeo! Romeo!—
Who ever would have thought it?—Romeo!

Jul. What devil art thou, that dost torment me thus?
This torture should be roar'd in dismal hell.

Hath Romeo slain himself? say thou but *I*,

And that bare vowel *I* shall poison more

Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice:²

I am not *I*, if there be such an *I*;

Or those eyes shut, that make thee answer, *I*.

If he be slain, say—*I*; or if not, no:

Brief sounds determine of my weal, or woe.

Nurse. I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes,—
God save the mark!³—here on his manly breast:

A piteous corse, a bloody piteous corse;

Pale, pale as ashes, all bedawb'd in blood,

All in gore blood;—I swooned at the sight.

Jul.

²The strange lines that follow here in the common books, are not in the old edition. POPE.

The strange lines are these:

I am not *I*, if there be such an *I*,

Or these eyes shut, that make thee answer *I*.

If he be slain, say—*I*; or if not, no:

Brief sounds determine of my weal or woe.

These lines hardly deserve emendation; yet it may be proper to observe, that their meanness has not placed them below the malice of fortune, the first two of them being evidently transposed; we should read:

—that bare vowel *I* shall poison more,

Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice,

Or those eyes *shot*, that make thee answer, *I*.

I am not *I*, &c. JOHNSON.

I think the transposition recommended may be spared. The second line is corrupted. Read *shot* instead of *shot*, and then the meaning will be sufficiently intelligible.

Shot, however, may be the same as *shot*. STEEVENS.

³This proverbial exclamation occurs again, with equal obscurity, in *Othello*, Act I. sc. i. STEEVENS.

Jul. O break, my heart!—poor bankrupt, break at once!
To prison, eyes! ne'er look on liberty!
Vile earth, to earth resign; end motion here;
And thou and Romeo, press one heavy bier!

Nurse. O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!
O courteous Tybalt! honest gentleman!
'That ever I should live to see thee dead!

Jul. What storm is this, that blows so contrary?
Is Romeo slaughter'd? and is Tybalt dead?
My dear-lov'd cousin, and my dearer lord?—
Then, dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom!
For who is living if those two are gone?

Nurse. Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banished;
Romeo, that kill'd him, he is banished.

Jul. O God! did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

Nurse. It did, it did; alas the day! it did.

Jul. O serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face!⁴
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!
Dove-feather'd raven!⁵ wolvisk-ravening lamb!
Despised substance of divinest show!
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
A damned faint, an honourable villain!—
O, nature! what hadst thou to do in hell,
When thou did'st bower the spirit of a fiend!

In

⁴ The same images occur in *Macbeth*:

“ — look like the innocent flower,
“ But be the serpent under it.” HENLEY.

⁵ The quarto 1599, and folio, read:

Ravenous dove-feather'd raven, wolvisk-ravening lamb.

The word *ravenous*, which was written probably in the manuscript by mistake in the latter part of the line, for *ravening*, and then struck out, crept from thence to the place where it appears. It was properly rejected by Mr. Theobald. MALONE.

This passage Mr. Pope has thrown out of the text, because these two noble *hemistichs* are inharmonious: but is there no such thing as a crutch for a labouring, halting verse? I'll venture to restore to the poet a line that is in his own mode of thinking, and truly worthy of him. *Ravenous* was blunderingly coined out of *raven* and *ravening*; and if we only throw it out, we gain at once an harmonious verse, and a proper contrast of epithets.

Dove-feather'd raven! wolvisk-rav'ning lamb! THEOBALD.

In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?—
 Was ever book, containing such vile matter,
 So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell
 In such a gorgeous palace!

Nurse. There's no trust,
 No faith, no honesty in men; all perjur'd,
 All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers.—
 Ah, where's my man? give me some *aqua vitæ*:—
 These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
 Shame come to Romeo!

Jul. Blister'd be thy tongue,
 For such a wish! he was not born to shame:
 Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit;
 For 'tis a throne where honour may be crown'd
 Sole monarch of the universal earth.
 O, what a beast was I to chide at him!

Nurse. Will you speak well of him that kill'd your cousin?

Jul. Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?
 Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name,⁶
 When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it?—
 But, wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin?
 That villain cousin would have kill'd my husband:
 Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring;
 Your tributary drops belong to woe,
 Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.
 My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain;
 And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband:
 All this is comfort; Wherefore weep I then?
 Some word there was, worser than Tybalt's death,
 That murder'd me: I would forget it fain;
 But, O! it presses to my memory,
 Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds:
Tybalt is dead, and Romeo—banished;
That—banished, that one word—banished,
 Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts.⁷ Tybalt's death

Was

⁶ To smooth in ancient language, is to stroke, to caress, to fondle.

STEEVENS.

⁷ Hath put Tybalt out of my mind, as if out of being.

JOHNSON.

The true meaning is,—I am more affected by Romeo's banishment
 than

Was woe enough, if it had ended there :
 Or,—if four woe delights in fellowship,
 And needly will be rank'd with other griefs,—
 Why follow'd not, when she said—Tybalt's dead,
 Thy father, or thy mother, nay, or both,
 Which modern lamentation might have mov'd ?⁸
 But, with a rear-ward following Tybalt's death,
Romeo is banished,—to speak that word,
 Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,
 All slain, all dead :—*Romeo is banished*,—
 There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,
 In that word's death ; no words can that woe sound.—
 Where is my father, and my mother, nurse ?

Nurse. Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corse :
 Will you go to them ? I will bring you thither.

Jul. Wash they his wounds with tears ? mine shall be
 spent,

When theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.
 Take up those cords :—Poor ropes, you are beguil'd,
 Both you and I ; for Romeo is exil'd :
 He made you for a highway to my bed ;
 But I, a maid, die maiden-widowed.
 Come, cords ; come, nurse ; I'll to my wedding bed ;
 And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead !

Nurse. Hie to your chamber : I'll find Romeo
 To comfort you :—I wot well where he is.
 Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night ;
 I'll to him ; he is hid at Laurence' cell.

Jul. O find him ! give this ring to my true knight,
 And bid him come to take his last farewell. [*Exeunt*.
 SCENE.

than I should be by the death of ten thousand such relations as Tybalt.
 RITSON.

That is, is worse than the loss of ten thousand Tybalts. Dr. Johnson's
 explanation cannot be right ; for the passage itself shows that Tybalt
 was not out of her mind. M. MASON.

⁸ This line is left out of the later edition, I suppose because the editors
 did not remember that Shakspeare uses *modern* for *common*, or *slight* : I
 believe it was in his time confounded in colloquial language with *moderate*.

JOHNSON.

It means only *trite*, *common*. STEEVENS.

S C E N E III.

*Friar Laurence's Cell.**Enter Friar LAURENCE and ROMEO.*

Fri. Romeo, come forth ; come forth, thou fearful man ;
Affliction is enamour'd of thy parts,
And thou art wedded to calamity.

Rom. Father, what news ? what is the prince's doom ?
What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand,
That I yet know not ?

Fri. Too familiar
Is my dear son with such foul company :
I bring thee tidings of the prince's doom.

Rom. What less than dooms-day is the prince's doom ?

Fri. A gentler judgement vanish'd from his lips,
Not body's death, but body's banishment.

Rom. Ha ! banishment ? be merciful, say—death :
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death : do not say—banishment.

Fri. Hence from Verona art thou banished :
Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

Rom. There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
Hence-banished is banish'd from the world,
And world's exile is death :—then banishment
Is death mis-term'd : calling death—banishment,
Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe,
And smil'st upon the stroke that murders me.

Fri. O deadly sin ! O rude unthankfulness !
Thy fault our law calls death ; but the kind prince,
Taking thy part, hath rush'd aside the law,
And turn'd that black word death to banishment :
This is dear mercy,⁹ and thou see'st it not.

Rom. 'Tis torture, and not mercy : heaven is here,
Where Juliet lives ; and every cat, and dog,

And

⁹ The earliest copy reads—This is *mere* mercy. MALONE.

Mere mercy, in ancient language, signifies *absolute* mercy.

And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven, and may look on her,
But Romeo may not.—More validity,
More honourable state, more courtship² lives
In carrion flies, than Romeo: they may seize
On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand,
And steal immortal blessing from her lip;
Who, even in pure and vestal modesty,
Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin;
But Romeo may not; he is banished:
Flies may do this, when I from this must fly;
They are free men, but I am banished
And say'st thou yet, that exile is not death?
Hadst thou no poison mix'd, no sharp-ground knife,
No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,
But—banished—to kill me; banished?
O friar, the damned use that word in hell;
Howlings attend it: How hast thou the heart,
Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,
A sin-absolver, and my friend profess'd,
To mangle me with that word—banishment?

Fri. Thou fond mad man, hear me but speak a word.

Rom. O, thou wilt speak again of banishment.

Fri. I'll give thee armour to keep off that word;
Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy,
To comfort thee, though thou art banished.

Rom. Yet banished?—Hang up philosophy!
Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,
Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom;
It helps not, it prevails not, talk no more.

Fri. O, then I see that madmen have no ears.

Rom. How should they, when that wise men have no
eyes?

Fri.

² *Validity* seems here to mean *worth* or *dignity*: and *courtship* the state of a courtier permitted to approach the highest presence. JOHNSON.

Validity is employed to signify *worth* or *value*, in the first scene of *King Lear*. STEEVENS.

By *courtship*, the author seems rather to have meant, the state of a lover; that dalliance, in which he who courts or wooes a lady is sometimes indulged. MALONE.

Fri. Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.

Rom. Thou can'st not speak of what thou dost not feel;
Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
An hour but married, Tybalt murdered,
Doting like me, and like me banished,
Then might'st thou speak, then might'st thou tear thy hair,
And fall upon the ground, as I do now,
Taking the measure of an unmade grave.

Fri. Arise; one knocks; good Romeo, hide thyself.

[*Knocking within.*]

Rom. Not I; unless the breath of heart-sick groans,
Mist-like, infold me from the search of eyes.

[*Knocking.*]

Fri. Hark, how they knock!—Who's there?—Romeo,
arise;

Thou wilt be taken:—Stay a while: stand up;

[*Knocking.*]

Run to my study:—By and by:—God's will!

What wilfulness is this?—I come, I come.

[*Knocking.*]

Who knocks so hard? whence come you? what's your will?

Nurse. [*within.*] Let me come in, and you shall know
my errand;

I come from lady Juliet.

Fri.

Welcome then.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. O holy friar, O, tell me, holy friar,
Where is my lady's lord, where's Romeo?

Fri. There on the ground, with his own tears made drunk.

Nurse. O, he is even in my mistress' case,
Just in her case!

Fri. O woeful sympathy!

Piteous predicament!³

Nurse.

Even so lies she,

Blubbering.

³ The old copies give these words to the Nurse. One may wonder the editors did not see that such language must necessarily belong to the Friar. FARMER.

Dr. Farmer's emendation may justly claim that place in the text to which I have now advanced it. STEEVENS.

Blubbering and weeping, weeping and blubbering :—
Stand up, stand up! stand, an you be a man ;
For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand ;
Why should you fall into so deep an O?

Rom. Nurse!

Nurse. Ah fir! ah fir!—Well, death's the end of all.

Rom. Spak'st thou of Juliet? how is it with her?

Doth she not think me an old murderer,
Now I have stain'd the childhood of our joy
With blood remov'd but little from her own?
Where is she? and how doth she? and what says
My conceal'd lady to our cancell'd love?⁴

Nurse. O, she says nothing, fir, but weeps and weeps ;
And now falls on her bed ; and then starts up,
And Tybalt calls ; and then on Romeo cries,
And then down falls again.

Rom. As if that name,
Shot from the deadly level of a gun,
Did murder her; as that name's curst hand
Murder'd her kinsman.—O tell me, friar, tell me,
In what vile part of this anatomy
Doth my name lodge? tell me, that I may sack
The hateful mansion. [drawing his sword]

Fri. Hold thy desperate hand :
Art thou a man? thy form cries out, thou art ;
Thy tears are womanish ; thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast :
Unseemly woman,⁵ in a seeming man!
Or ill-beseeming beast, in seeming both!

Thou

⁴ The folio reads—*conceal'd* love. JOHNSON.

The quarto, *cancell'd* love. STEEVENS.

The epithet *concealed* is to be understood, not of the person, but of the condition of the lady. So that the sense is, my lady whose being so, together with our marriage which made her so, is concealed from the world.

HEATH.

⁵ *Thou art a beast of ill qualities, under the appearance both of a woman and a man.* JOHNSON.

A person who seemed both man and woman, would be a monster ; and of course an ill-beseeming beast. This is all the friar meant to express.

M. MASON.

Thou hast amaz'd me : by my holy order,
 I thought thy disposition better temper'd.
 Hast thou slain Tybalt ? wilt thou slay thyself ?
 And slay thy lady too that lives in thee,
 By doing damned hate upon thyself ?
 Why rail'st thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth ?
 Since birth, and heaven, and earth, all three do meet
 In thee at once ; which thou at once would'st lose.
 Fie, fie ! thou sham'st thy shape, thy love, thy wit ;
 Which, like an usurer, abound'st in all,
 And usest none in that true use indeed,
 Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit.
 Thy noble shape is but a form of wax,
 Digressing from the valour of a man :
 Thy dear love, sworn, but hollow perjury,
 Killing that love which thou hast vow'd to cherish :
 Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
 Misshapen in the conduct of them both,
 Like powder in a skill-less soldier's flask, ⁵
 Is set on fire by thine own ignorance,
 And thou dismember'd with thine own defence. ⁶
 What, rouse thee, man ! thy Juliet is alive,
 For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead ;
 There art thou happy : Tybalt would kill thee,
 But thou slew'st Tybalt ; there art thou happy too : ⁷
 The law, that threaten'd death, becomes thy friend,
 And turns it to exile ; there art thou happy :
 A pack of blessings lights upon thy back ;
 Happiness courts thee in her best array ;
 But, like a mis-behav'd and sullen wench,
 Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love :

Take

⁵ To understand the force of this allusion, it should be remembered that the ancient English soldiers, using *match*-locks, instead of locks with flints as at present, were obliged to carry a lighted *match* hanging at their belts, very near the wooden *flask* in which they kept their powder.

STEEVENS.

⁶ And thou torn to pieces with thy own weapons. JOHNSON.

⁷ Thus the first quarto. In the subsequent quartos and the folio too is omitted. MALONE.

It

Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.
Go, get thee to thy love, as was decreed,
Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her;
But, look, thou stay not till the watch be set,
For then thou canst not pass to Mantua;
Where thou shalt live, till we can find a time
To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,
Beg pardon of the prince, and call thee back
With twenty hundred thousand times more joy
Than thou went'st forth in lamentation.—
Go before, nurse: commend me to thy lady
And bid her hasten all the house to bed,
Which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto:
Romeo is coming.

Nurse. O Lord, I could have staid here all the night;
To hear good counsel: O, what learning is!—
My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

Rom. Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.

Nurse. Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir:
Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.

[*Exit Nurse.*]

Rom. How well my comfort is reviv'd by this!

Fri. Go hence: Good night; and here stands all your
state;⁸

Either be gone before the watch be set,
Or by the break of day disguis'd from hence:
Sojourn in Mantua; I'll find out your man,
And he shall signify from time to time
Every good hap to you, that chances here:
Give me thy hand; 'tis late: farewell; good night.

Rom. But that a joy past joy calls out on me,
It were a grief, so brief to part with thee:
Farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

It should not be concealed, that the reading of the *second folio* corresponds with that of the *first quarto*:

——— there art thou happy too—. STEEVENS.

The word is omitted in all the intermediate editions; a sufficient proof that the emendations of that folio are not always the result of ignorance or caprice. RITSON.

⁸ The whole of your fortune depends on this. JOHNSON.

SCENE

S C E N E IV.⁹*A Room in Capulet's House.**Enter CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, and PARIS.*

Cap. Things have fallen out, fir, so unluckily,
That we have not had time to move our daughter:
Look you she lov'd her kinsman Tybalt dearly,
And so did I;—Well, we were born to die.—
'Tis very late, she'll not come down to-night:
I promise you, but for your company,
I would have been a-bed an hour ago.

Par. These times of woe afford no time to woo:
Madam, good night: commend me to your daughter.

La. Cap. I will, and know her mind early to-morrow;
To-night she's mew'd up² to her heaviness.

Cap. Sir Paris, I will make a desperate³ tender
Of my child's love: I think, she will be rul'd
In all respects by me; nay more, I doubt it not.
Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed;
Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love;
And bid her, mark you me, on wednesday next.—
But, soft: What day is this?

Par. Monday, my lord.

Cap. Monday? ha! ha! Well, wednesday is too soon,
O' thursday let it be;—o' thursday, tell her,
She shall be married to this noble earl:—
Will you be ready? do you like this haste?

We'll

⁹ Some few unnecessary verses are omitted in this scene according to the oldest editions. POPE.

Mr. Pope means, as appears from his edition, that he has followed the oldest copy, and omitted some unnecessary verses which are not found there, but inserted in the enlarged copy of this play. But he has expressed himself so loosely, as to have been misunderstood by Mr. Steevens. In the text these unnecessary verses, as Mr. Pope calls them, are preserved, conformably to the enlarged copy of 1599. MALONE.

² This is a phrase from falconry. A *mew* was a place of confinement for hawks. STEEVENS.

³ *Desperate* means only *bold, adventurous*, as if he had said in the vulgar phrase, *I will speak a bold word, and venture to promise you my daughter.*

JOHNSON.

We'll keep no great ado;—a friend, or two:—
For hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,
It may be thought we held him carelessly,
Being our kinsman, if we revel much:
Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends,
And there an end. But what say you to thursday?

Par. My lord, I would that thursday were to-morrow.

Cap. Well, get you gone:—O' thursday be it then:—
Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed,
Prepare her, wife, against this wedding-day.—
Farewell, my lord.—Light to my chamber, ho!
Afore me, it is so very late, that we
May call it early by and by:—Good night. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.

Juliet's Chamber.⁴

Enter ROMEO and JULIET.

Jul. Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree:⁵
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Rom. It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops;
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

Jul. Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I:
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:

Therefore

⁴ The stage direction in the first edition is—"Enter Romeo and Juliet, at a window. In the second quarto, "Enter Romeo and Juliet, aloft." They appeared probably in the balcony which was erected on the old English stage. See the *Account of the Ancient Theatres*. MALONE.

⁵ This is not merely a poetical supposition. It is observed of the nightingale, that, if undisturbed, she sits and sings upon the same tree for many weeks together. STEEVENS.

Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.

Rom. Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.

I'll say, yon grey is not the morning's eye,

'Tis but the pale reflex⁶ of Cynthia's brow;

Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat

The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:

I have more care to stay, than will to go;⁷—

Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.—

How is't, my soul? let's talk, it is not day.

Jul. It is, it is, hie hence, be gone, away;

It is the lark that sings so out of tune,

Straining harsh discords, and unpleasing sharps.

Some say, the lark makes sweet division;⁸

This doth not so, for she divideth us:

Some say, the lark and loathed toad change eyes;

O, now I would they had chang'd voices too!⁹

Since

⁶ The appearance of a cloud opposed to the moon. JOHNSON.

⁷ Would it not be better thus, *I have more will to stay, than care to go?*

JOHNSON.

Care was frequently used in Shakspeare's age for *inclination*.

MALONE.

⁸ *Division* seems to have been the technical phrase for the pauses or parts of a musical composition.

To *run a division*, is also a musical term. STEEVENS.

⁹ I wish the lark and toad had changed voices; for then the noise which I hear would be that of the toad, not of the lark; it would consequently be evening, at which time the toad croaks; not morning, when the lark sings; and we should not be under the necessity of separation. A. C.

If the toad and lark had chang'd voices, the unnatural croak of the latter would have been no indication of the appearance of day, and consequently no signal for her lover's departure. This is apparently the aim and purpose of Juliet's wish. HEATH.

The *toad* having very fine eyes, and the *lark* very ugly ones, was the occasion of a common saying amongst the people, that *the toad and lark had changed eyes*. To this the speaker alludes. WARBURTON.

This tradition of the toad and lark I have heard expressed in a rustick rhyme:

“ — To heav'n I'd fly,

“ But that the toad beguil'd me of mine eye.”

JOHNSON.

Read *chang'd eyes*. M. MASON.

Since arm from arm² that voice doth us affray,
Hunting thee hence with hunts-up to the day.³

O, now be gone; more light and light it grows,

Rom. More light and light?—more dark and dark our
woes.

Enter NURSE.

Nurse. Madam.

Jul. Nurse?

Nurse. Your lady mother's coming to your chamber:
The day is broke; be wary, look about. [*Exit Nurse.*

Jul. Then, window, let day in, and let life out.

Rom. Farewell, farewell! one kiss, and I'll descend.

[*ROMEO descends.*

Jul. Art thou gone so? my love! my lord! my friend!
I must hear from thee every day i' the hour,
For in a minute there are many days:
O! by this count I shall be much in years,
Ere I again behold my Romeo.

Rom. Farewell; I will omit no opportunity
That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

Jul. O, think'st thou, we shall ever meet again?

Rom. I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve
For sweet discourses in our time to come.

Jul. O God! I have an ill-divining soul:⁴

Methinks,

² These two lines are omitted in the modern editions, and do not deserve to be replaced, but as they may show the danger of critical temerity. Dr. Warburton's change of *I would* to *I wot* was specious enough, yet it is evidently erroneous. The sense is this: *The lark, they say, has lost her eyes to the toad, and now I would the toad had her voice too, since she uses it to the disturbance of lovers.* JOHNSON.

³ The *bunts up* was the name of the tune anciently played to wake the hunters and collect them together. STEEVENS.

Puttenham in his *Art of English Poesy*, 1589, speaking of one Gray, says, "what good estimation did he grow into with king Henry [the Eighth] and afterwards with the duke of Somerset protector, for making certaine merry ballads, whereof one chiefly was *The bunte is up, the bunte is up.*" RITSON.

A *buntup* also signified a morning song to a new-married woman, the day after her marriage, and is certainly used here in that sense. See Cotgrave's Dictionary, in v. *Resveil*. MALONE.

⁴ This miserable prescience of futurity I have always regarded as a circumstance.

Methinks, I see thee, now thou art below,
As one dead⁵ in the bottom of a tomb:
Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

Rom. And trust me, love, in my eye so do you:
Dry sorrow drinks our blood.⁶ Adieu! adieu!

[*Exit Romeo.*]

Jul. O fortune, fortune! all men call thee fickle:
If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him.
That is renown'd for faith?⁷ Be fickle, fortune;
For then, I hope, thou wilt not keep him long,
But send him back.

La. Cap. [*within.*] Ho, daughter! are you up?

Jul. Who is't that calls? is it my lady mother?
Is she not down so late, or up so early?⁸
What unaccustom'd cause procures her hither?⁹

Enter Lady CAPULET.

La. Cap. Why, how now, Juliet?

Jul. Madam, I am not well.

La. Cap. Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?
What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?

An
circumstance particularly beautiful. The same kind of warning from the
mind, Romeo seems to have been conscious of, on his going to the en-
tertainment at the house of Capulet:

“ — my mind misgives,
“ Some consequence yet hanging in the stars,
“ Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
“ From this night's revels.” STEEVENS.

⁵ So in our author's *Venus and Adonis*:

“ The thought of it doth make my faint heart bleed;
“ And fear doth teach it divination;
“ I prophecy thy death.” MALONE.

⁶ This is an allusion to the proverb—“ Sorrow's dry.” STEEVENS.

He is accounting for their paleness. It was an ancient notion that sorrow
consumed the blood, and shortened life. Hence in the third part of *King*
Henry VI. we have—“ blood-sucking sighs.” MALONE.

⁷ This Romeo, so *renown'd for faith*, was but the day before dying for
love of another woman: yet this is natural. Romeo was the darling object
of Juliet's love, and Romeo was, of course, to have every excellence.

M. MASON.

⁸ Is she not laid down in her bed at so late an hour as this? or rather
is she risen from bed at so early an hour of the morn? MALONE.

⁹ *Procures for brings.* WARBURTON.

An if thou could'st, thou could'st not make him live ;
Therefore, have done : Some grief shows much of love ;
But much of grief shows still some want of wit.

Jul. Yet let me weep for such a feeling loss.

La. Cap. So shall you feel the loss, but not the friend
Which you weep for.

Jul. Feeling so the loss,
I cannot choose but ever weep the friend.

La. Cap. Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for his death,
As that the villain lives which slaughter'd him.

Jul. What villain, madam ?

La. Cap. That same villain, Romeo.

Jul. Villain and he are many miles asunder.
God pardon him ! I do, with all my heart ;
And yet no man, like he, doth grieve my heart.

La. Cap. That is, because the traitor murderer lives.

Jul. Ay, madam, from² the reach of these my hands.
Would, none but I might venge my cousin's death !

La. Cap. We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not :
Then weep no more. I'll send to one in Mantua,—
Where that same banish'd runagate doth live,—
That shall bestow on him so sure a draught³
That he shall soon keep Tybalt company :
And then, I hope, thou wilt be satisfied.

Jul. Indeed, I never shall be satisfied
With Romeo, till I behold him—dead—
Is my poor heart so for a kinsman vex'd :—
Madam if you could find out but a man
To bear a poison, I would temper it ;
That Romeo should, upon receipt thereof,
Soon sleep in quiet.—O, how my heart abhors

To

² Juliet's equivocations are rather too artful for a mind disturbed by the loss of a new lover. JOHNSON.

³ Some of the old copies read :

Shall give him such an unaccustomed dram. STEEVENS.

In vulgar language, Shall give him a *dram* which he is *not used to*.
Though I have, if I mistake not, observed, that in old books *unaccustomed*
signifies *wonderful, powerful, efficacious*. JOHNSON.

I believe Dr. Johnson's first explanation is the true one. Barnaby.
Googe, in his *Cupido Conquered*, 1563, uses *unacquainted* in the same
sense. STEEVENS.

To hear him nam'd,—and cannot come to him.

To wreak the love I bore my cousin Tybalt

Upon his body that hath slaughter'd him!

La. Cap. Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man.
But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.

Jul. And joy comes well in such a needful time:
What are they, I beseech your ladyship?

La. Cap. Well, well, thou hast a careful father, child;
One, who, to put thee from thy heaviness,
Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy,
That thou expect'st not, nor I look'd not for.

Jul. Madam, in happy time,³ what day is that?

La. Cap. Marry, my child, early next thursday morn,
The gallant, young, and noble gentleman,
The county Paris,⁴ at saint Peter's church,
Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride.

Jul. Now, by saint Peter's church, and Peter too,
He shall not make me there a joyful bride.
I wonder at this haste; that I must wed
Ere he, that should be husband, comes to woo.
I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,
I will not marry yet; and, when I do, I swear,
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,
Rather than Paris:—These are news indeed!

La. Cap. Here comes your father; tell him so yourself
And see how he will take it at your hands.

Enter CAPULET and Nurse.

Cap. When the sun sets, the air doth drizzle dew⁵
But for the sunset of my brother's son,

It

³ *A la bonne heure.* This phrase was interjected, when the hearer was not quite so well pleased as the speaker. JOHNSON.

⁴ It is remarked, that "Paris, though in one place called *Earl*, is most commonly stiled the *Countie* in this play. Shakspeare seems to have preferred, for some reason or other, the *Italian Comte* to our *Count*: perhaps he took it from the old English novel, from which he is said to have taken his plot."—He certainly did so: Paris is there first stiled a *young Earle*, and afterwards *Counte*, *Countee*, and *County*; according to the unsettled orthography of the time. The word however is frequently met with in other writers; particularly in Fairfax. FARMER.

⁵ Thus the undated quarto. The quarto 1599, and the folio, read—*the earth* doth drizzle dew. The line is not in the original copy.

The

It rains downright.—

How now? a conduit, girl⁶? what, still in tears?

Evermore showering? In one little body

Thou counterfeit'st a bark, a sea, a wind:

For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,

Do ebb and flow with tears? the bark thy body is,

Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs;

Who,—raging with thy tears, and they with them,—

Without a sudden calm, will overset

Thy tempest-tossed body.—How now, wife?

Have you deliver'd to her our decree?

La. Cap. Ay, fir; but she will none, she gives you thanks.
I would, the fool were married to her grave!

Cap. Soft, take me with you, take me with you, wife.

How! will she none? doth she not give us thanks?

Is she not proud? doth she not count her blest'd,

Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought

So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom?

Jul. Not proud, you have; but thankful, that you have:
Proud can I never be of what I hate,

But thankful even for hate, that is meant love.

Cap. How now! how now, chop-logick!⁷ What is this?
Proud

The reading of the quarto 1599 and the folio is philosophically true; and perhaps ought to be preferred. Dew undoubtedly rises from the earth in consequence of the action of the heat of the sun on its moist surface. Those vapours which rise from the earth in the course of the day, are evaporated by the warmth of the air as soon as they arise; but those which rise after sun-set, form themselves into drops, or rather into that fog or mist which is termed dew.

Though, with the modern editors, I have followed the undated quarto, and printed—the *air* doth drizzle dew, I suspected when this note was written, that *earth* was the poet's word, and a line in *The Rape of Lucrece* strongly supports that reading:

“But as the *earth* doth weep, the *sun* being set,—.” MALONE.

That Shakspeare thought it was the *air* and not the *earth* that drizzled dew, is evident from other passages. So in *King John*:

“Before the *dew* of evening fall.” RITSON.

⁶ Conduits in the form of human figures, it has been already observed, were common in Shakspeare's time. MALONE.

⁷ This term, which hitherto has been divided into two words, I have given as one, it being, as I learn from *The xxiii orders of Knaves*, bl. l. no date, a nick-name.

“*Choplogyk* is he that whan his mayster rebuketh his servaunt for his defawtes, he will gyve hym xx wordes for one. STEEVENS.

Proud,—and, I thank you,—and, I thank you not ;—
 And yet not proud ;—Mistress minion, you,
 Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no pouds,
 But settle your fine joints 'gainst thursday next,
 To go with Paris to saint Peter's church,
 Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.
 Out, you green-sickness carrion ! out, you baggage !
 You tallow face !⁸

La. Cap. Fie, fie ! what are you mad ?

Jul. Good father, I beseech you on my knees,
 Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

Cap. Hang thee, young baggage ! disobedient wretch !
 I tell thee what,—get thee to church o'thursday,
 Or never after look me in the face :
 Speak not, reply not, do not answer me ;
 My fingers itch.—Wife, we scarce thought us blest'd,
 That God had sent us but this only child ;
 But now I see this one is one too much,
 And that we have a curse in having her :
 Out on her, hilding !

Nurse. God in heaven blest her !—
 You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so.

Cap. And why, my lady wisdom ? hold your tongue,
 Good prudence ; smatter with your gossips, go.

Nurse. I speak no treason.

Cap. O, God ye good den !

Nurse. May not one speak ?

Cap. Peace, you mumbling fool !
 Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's bowl,
 For here we need it not.

La. Cap. You are too hot.

Cap. God's bread ! it makes me mad : Day, night, late,
 early,

At

⁸ Such was the indelicacy of the age of Shakspeare, that authors were not contented only to employ these terms of abuse in their own original performances, but even felt no reluctance to introduce them in their versions of the most chaste and elegant of the Greek or Roman Poets. Stanyhurst, the translator of Virgil in 1582, makes Dido call Æneas—*bedgebrat, cullion, and tar-breech*, in the course of one speech.

At home, abroad, alone, in company,
Waking, or sleeping, still my care hath been
To have her match'd : and having now provided
A gentleman of princely parentage,
Of fair demesnes, youthful, and nobly train'd,
Stuff'd (as they say,) with honourable parts,
Proportion'd as one's heart could wish a man,—
And then to have a wretched puling fool,
A whining mammet, in her fortune's tender,
To answer—*I'll not wed, I cannot love,
I am too young,—I pray you, pardon me;—*
But, an you will not wed, I'll pardon you :
Graze where you will, you shall not house with me;
Look to't, think on't, I do not use to jest.
Thursday is near; lay hand on heart, advise :
An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend ;
An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die i' the streets,
For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,
Nor what is mine shall never do thee good :
Trust to't, bethink you, I'll not be forsworn.

[Exit.]

Jul. Is there no pity fitting in the clouds,
That sees into the bottom of my grief?
O, sweet my mother, cast me not away!
Delay this marriage for a month, a week;
Or, if you do not, make the bridal bed
In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.

La. Cap. Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word.
Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee.

[Exit.]

Jul. O God!—O nurse! how shall this be prevented?
My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven;
How shall that faith return again to earth,
Unless that husband send it me from heaven
By leaving earth?—comfort me, counsel me.—
Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems
Upon so soft a subject as myself!—
What say'st thou? hast thou not a word of joy?
Some comfort, nurse.

Nurse. Faith, here 'tis: Romeo
Is banished; and all the world to nothing,
That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you;

N 2

Or,

Or, if he do, it needs must be by stealth.
 Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,
 I think it best you married with the county.⁹
 O, he's a lovely gentleman!
 Romeo's a dishclout to him; an eagle, madam,
 Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye,
 As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,
 I think you are happy in this second match,
 For it excels your first: or if it did not,
 Your first is dead; or 'twere as good he were,
 As living here² and you no use of him.

Jul. Speakest thou from thy heart?

Nurse.

From my soul too;

Or else beshrew them both.

Jul.

Amen!

Nurse.

To what?³

Jul. Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much.
 Go in; and tell my lady I am gone,
 Having displeas'd my father, to Laurence' cell,
 To make confession, and to be absolv'd.

Nurse. Marry, I will; and this is wisely done. [Exit.]

Jul. Ancient damnation; O most wicked fiend!
 It is more sin—to wish me thus forsworn,
 Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue
 Which she hath prais'd him with above compare
 So many thousand times?—Go, counsellor;

Thou

⁹ The character of the nurse exhibits a just picture of those whose actions have no principles for their foundation. She has been unfaithful to the trust reposed in her by Capulet, and is ready to embrace any expedient that offers, to avert the consequences of her first infidelity.

STEEVENS.

This picture, however, is not an original. In *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* 1562, the nurse exhibits the same readiness to accommodate herself to the present conjuncture. MALONE.

Sir John Vanbrugh, in the *Relapse*, has copied in this respect the character of his nurse from Shakspeare. BLACKSTONE.

² Sir Thomas Hanmer reads, *as living* hence, that is, at a distance, in banishment; but *here* may signify, *in this world*.

³ The syllable—*To*, which is wanting towards the measure, I have ventured to supply. When Juliet says—*Amen!* the Nurse might naturally ask her to which of the foregoing sentiments so solemn a formula was subjoined. STEEVENS.

Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.—
I'll to the friar, to know his remedy ;
If all else fail, myself have power to die.

[Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter Friar LAURENCE and PARIS.

Fri. On thursday, sir? the time is very short.

Par. My father Capulet will have it so;
And I am nothing slow, to slack his haste.⁴

Fri. You say, you do not know the lady's mind;
Uneven is the course, I like it not.

Par. Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,
And therefore have I little talk'd of love;
For Venus smiles not in a house of tears.
Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous,
That she doth give her sorrow so much sway;
And, in his wisdom, hastes our marriage,
To stop the inundation of her tears;

Which,

⁴ *His haste shall not be abated by my slowness.* It might be read:

And I am nothing slow to *back* his haste:

that is, I am diligent to *abet* and *enforce* his haste. JOHNSON.

Slack was certainly the author's word, for, in the first edition the line ran—

“And I am nothing *slack* to slow his haste.”

Back could not have stood there.

If this kind of phraseology be justifiable, it can be justified only by supposing the meaning to be, *there is nothing of slowness in me, to induce me to slacken or abate his haste.* The meaning of Paris is very clear; he does not wish to restrain Capulet, or to delay his own marriage; but the words which the poet has given him, import the reverse of this, and seem rather to mean, *I am not backward in restraining his haste*; I endeavour to retard him as much as I can. Dr. Johnson saw the impropriety of this expression, and that his interpretation extorted a meaning from the words, which they do not at first present; and hence his proposed alteration; but our author must answer for his own peculiarities.

MALONE.

Which, too much minded by herself alone,
May be put from her by society :

Now do you know the reason of this haste.

Fri. I would I knew not why it should be slow'd. [*Aside.*
Look, sir, here comes the lady towards my cell.

Enter JULIET.

Par. Happily met, my lady, and my wife!

Jul. That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

Par. That may be, must be, love, on thursday next.

Jul. What must be shall be.

Fri. That's a certain text.

Par. Come you to make confession to this father?

Jul. To answer that, were to confess to you.

Par. Do not deny to him, that you love me.

Jul. I will confess to you, that I love him.

Par. So will you, I am sure, that you love me.

Jul. If I do so, it will be of more price,

Being spoke behind your back, than to your face.

Par. Poor soul, thy face is much abus'd with tears.

Jul. The tears have got small victory by that;

For it was bad enough, before their spite.

Par. Thou wrong'st it, more than tears, with that report.

Jul. That is no slander, sir, that is a truth;

And what I spake, I spake it to my face.

Par. Thy face is mine, and thou hast slander'd it.

Jul. It may be so, for it is not mine own.—

Are you at leisure, holy father, now;

Or shall I come to you at evening mass? ⁵

Fri. My leisure serves me, pensive daughter now :
My lord, we must entreat the time alone.

Par. God shield, I should disturb devotion!—

Juliet, on thursday early will I rouse you :

Till then adieu! and keep this holy kiss. [*Exit PARIS.*

Jul. O, shut the door! and when thou hast done so,
Come weep with me; Past hope, past cure, past help!

Fri.

⁵ Juliet means *vesters*. There is no such thing as *evening mass*; which our author must necessarily have known, if, as there is some reason to believe, he had been bred a *Papist*. RITSON.

Fri. Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief;
It strains me past the compass of my wits:
I hear thou must, and nothing may prorogue it,
On Thursday next be married to this county.

Jul. Tell me not, friar, that thou hear'st of this,
Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it:
If, in thy wisdom thou canst give no help,
Do thou but call my resolution wise,
And with this knife I'll help it presently.
God join'd my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands;
And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo seal'd,
Shall be the label to another deed,⁶
Or my true heart with treacherous revolt
Turn to another, this shall slay them both:
Therefore, out of thy long-experienc'd time,
Give me some present counsel; or, behold,
'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife
Shall play the umpire;⁷ arbitrating that
Which the commission⁸ of thy years and art
Could to no issue of true honour bring.
Be not so long to speak; I long to die,
If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

Fri. Hold, daughter; I do spy a kind of hope,
Which craves as desperate an execution
As that is desperate which we would prevent.
If, rather than to marry county Paris,
Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself;
Then is it likely, thou wilt undertake
A thing like death to chide away this shame,

That

⁶ The seals of deeds in our authour's time were not impressed on the parchment itself on which the deed was written, but were appended on distinct slips or labels affixed to the deed. Hence in *King Richard II.* the duke of York discovers a covenant which his son the duke of Aumerle had entered into by the depending seal:

“What seal is that, which hangs without thy bosom?”

MALONE.

⁷ That is, this knife shall decide the struggle between me and my distresses. JOHNSON.

⁸ Commission is for authority or power. JOHNSON.

That cop'ft with death himfelf to fcape from it ;
And, if thou dar'ft, I'll give thee remedy.

Jul. O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
From off the battlements of yonder tower ;
Or walk in thievifh ways ; or bid me lurk
Where ferpents are ; chain me⁹ with roaring bears ;
Or fhut me nightly in a charnel-house,
O'er cover'd quite with dead men's rattling bones,
With reeky fhanks, and yellow chaplefs fculls ;
Or bid me go into a new-made grave,
And hide me with a dead man in his fhroud ;²
Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble ;
And

⁹ Or walk in thievifh ways, or bid me lurk
Where ferpents are ; chain me with roaring bears,
Or hide me nightly, &c.

It is thus the editions vary. POPE.

My edition has the words which Mr. Pope has omitted ; but the old copy feems in this place preferable ; only perhaps we might better read,
Where *savage* bears and *roaring* lions roam. JOHNSON.

I have inferted the lines which Mr. Pope omitted ; for which I muft offer this fhort apology : in the lines rejected by him we meet with three diftinct ideas, fuch as may be fupposed to excite terror in a woman, for one that is to be found in the others. The lines now omitted are thefe :

Or chain me to fome fteepy mountain's top,
Where roaring bears and favage lions roam ;
Or fhut me——. STEEVENS.

The lines laft quoted, which Mr. Pope and Dr. Johnson preferred, are found in the copy of 1597 : in the text the quarto of 1599 is followed, except that it has—Or *bide* me nightly, &c. MALONE.

² In the quarto, 1599, and 1609, this line ftands thus :

And hide me with a dead man in his,

The editor of the folio fupplied the defect by reading—in his *grave*, without adverting to the difgufting repetition of that word.

The original copy leads me to believe that Shakspeare wrote—in his *tomb* ; for there the line ftands thus ;

Or lay me in a *tombe* with one dead.

I have, however, with the other modern editors, followed the undated quarto, in which the printer filled up the line with the word *fhroud*.

MALONE.

It may be natural for the reader to afk by what evidence this pofitive affertion relative to the printer, is fupported.

To creep under a *fhroud*, and to be placed in clofe contact with a corpe, is furely a more terrifick idea than that of being merely laid in a *tomb* with a dead companion. STEEVENS.

And I will do it without fear or doubt,
To live an unstain'd wife to my sweet love.

Fri. Hold, then; go home, be merry, give consent
To marry Paris: Wednesday is to-morrow;
To-morrow night look that thou lie alone,
Let not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber:
Take thou this phial, being then in bed,
And this distilled liquor drink thou off:
When presently, through all thy veins shall run
A cold and drowfy humour, which shall seize
Each vital spirit; for no pulse shall keep
His natural progress, but surcease to beat:
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou liv'st;
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
To paly ashes; thy eyes' windows fall,
Like death when he shuts up the day of life;
Each part, depriv'd of supple government,
Shall stiff, and stark, and cold, appear like death:
And in this borrow'd likeness of shrunk death
Thou shalt remain full two and forty hours,
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.
Now when the bridegroom in the morning comes
To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead:
Then (as the manner of our country is,)
In thy best robes uncover'd on the bier,³

Thou

³ The Italian custom here alluded to, of carrying the dead body to the grave with the face *uncovered*, (which is not mentioned by Painter) our author found particularly described in *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*:

“ Another use there is, that whosoever dies,
“ Borne to their church *with open face upon the bier he lies,*
“ In wonted weed attir'd, not wrapt in winding-sheets.—”

MALONE.

Thus also Ophelia's song in *Hamlet*:

“ They bore him *bare-fac'd on the bier,—*” STEEVENS.

Between this line and the next, the quartos 1599, 1609, and the first folio, introduce the following verse, which the poet very probably had struck out on his revision, because it is quite unnecessary, as the sense of it is repeated, and as it will not connect with either:

Be borne to burial in thy kindred's grave.

Had Virgil lived to have revised his *Æneid*, he would hardly have permitted

Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault,
 Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
 In the mean time, against thou shalt awake,
 Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift;
 And hither shall he come; and he and I
 Will watch thy waking, and that very night
 Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.
 And this shall free thee from this present shame;
 If no unconstant toy,⁹ nor womanish fear,
 Abate thy valour in the acting it.

Jul. Give me, O give me! tell me not of fear.

Fri. Hold; get you gone, be strong and prosperous
 In this resolve: I'll send a friar with speed
 To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

Jul. Love, give me strength! and strength shall help
 afford.

Farewell, dear father!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in Capulet's House.

Enter Capulet, Lady Capulet, Nurse, and Servant.

Cap. So many guests invite as here are writ.—

[*Exit Servant.*]

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning cooks.²

2. Serv. You shall have none ill, sir; for I'll try if they
 can lick their fingers.

Cap. How canst thou try them so?

2. Serv. Marry, sir, 'tis an ill cook that cannot lick his
 own

permitted both of the following lines to remain in his text:

“ At *Venus* obscuro gradientes aere sepsit;

“ Et multo nebulæ circum *dea* fudit amictu.”

The awkward repetition of the nominative case in the second of them,
 seems to decide very strongly against it. STEEVENS.

⁹ If no fickle freak, no light caprice, no change of fancy, hinder the per-
 formance. JOHNSON.

² Twenty cooks for half a dozen guests! Either Capulet has altered his
 mind strangely, or our author forgot what he had just made him tell us.
 See p. 259. RITSON.

own fingers: therefore he, that cannot lick his fingers, goes not with me.

Cap. Go, begone.—

[*Exit* Servant.]

We shall be much unurnish'd for this time.—

What, is my daughter gone to Friar Laurence?

Nurse. Ay, forsooth.

Cap. Well, he may chance to do some good on her:

A peevish self-will'd harlotry it is.

Enter JULIET.

Nur. See, where she comes from shrift³ with merry look[•]

Cap. How now, my headstrong? where have you been gadding?⁴

Jul. Where I have learn'd me to repent the sin
Of disobedient opposition

To you, and your behests; and am enjoin'd

By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here,

And beg your pardon:—Pardon, I beseech you!

Henceforward I am ever rul'd by you.

Cap. Send for the county; go tell him of this;
I'll have this knot knit up to-morrow morning.

Jul. I met the youthful lord at Laurence' cell;
And gave him what becomed⁵ love I might,
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

Cap. Why, I am glad on't; this is well,—stand up:
This is as't should be.—Let me see the county;
Ay, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither.—
Now, afore God, this reverend holy friar,
All our whole city is much bound to him.

Jul. Nurse, will you go with me into my closet,
To help me fort such needful ornaments
As you think fit to furnish me to-morrow?

La. Cap.

³ i. e. from confession. STEEVENS.

⁴ The primitive sense of this word was to straggle from house to house, and collect money, under pretence of singing carols to the Blessed Virgin. See Mr. T. Warton's note on Milton's *Lycidas*, v. 40.

STEEVENS.

⁵ *Becomed* for *becoming*: one participle for the other; a frequent practice with our author. STEEVENS.

La. Cap. No, not till thursday; there is time enough.

Cap. Go, nurse, go with her:—we'll to church to-morrow. [*Exeunt JULIET and NURSE.*]

La. Cap. We shall be short⁶ in our provision;
'Tis now near night.⁷

Cap. Tush! I will stir about,
And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife:
Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up her;
I'll not to bed to-night;—let me alone;
I'll play the housewife for this once.—What, ho!—
They are all forth: Well, I will walk myself
To county Paris, to prepare him up
Against to-morrow: my heart is wond'rous light,
Since this fame wayward girl is so reclaim'd. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Juliet's Chamber.

Enter JULIET and Nurse.

Jul. Ay, those attires are best:—But, gentle nurse,
I pray thee, leave me to myself to-night;
For I have need of many orisons⁸
To move the heavens to smile upon my state,
Which, well thou know'st, is cross and full of sin.

Enter Lady CAPULET.

La. Cap. What, are you busy? do you need my help?

Jul.

⁶ That is, we shall be *defective*. JOHNSON.

⁷ It appears in a foregoing scene, that Romeo parted from his bride at day-break on *Tuesday* morning. Immediately afterwards she went to Friar Laurence, and he particularly mentions the day of the week, [*"Wednesday is to-morrow."*] She could not well have remained more than an hour or two with the friar, and she is just now returned from shrift;—yet lady Capulet says, "'tis near night," and this same night is ascertained to be *Tuesday*. This is one out of the many instances of our author's inaccuracy in the computation of time. MALONE.

⁸ Juliet plays most of her pranks under the appearance of religion: perhaps Shakspeare meant to puni sh her hypocrisy. JOHNSON.

Jul. No, madam; we have call'd such necessaries
As are behoveful for our state to-morrow:
So please you, let me now be left alone,
And let the nurse this night sit up with you;
For, I am sure, you have your hands full all,
In this so sudden business.

La. Cap. Good night!
Get thee to bed, and rest; for thou hast need.

[*Exeunt Lady Capulet and Nurse.*]

Jul. Farewell!—God knows, when we shall meet again.
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins,
That almost freezes up the heat of life:
I'll call them back again to comfort me:—
Nurse!—What should she do here?
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.—
Come, phial.—
What if this mixture do not work at all?
Must I of force be married to the county?
No, no;—this shall forbid it:—lie thou there.—

[*Laying down a dagger.*]

What if it be a poison, which the friar
Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead;
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd,
Because he married me before to Romeo?

I fear,

⁹ This stage-direction has been supplied by the modern editors. The quarto, 1597, reads: “—*Knife*, lie thou there.” It appears from several passages in our old plays, *knives* were formerly part of the accoutrements of a bride; and every thing *behov'eful* for Juliet's *state* had just been left with her. So in Decker's *Match me in London*, 1631:

“See at my girdle hang my *wedding knives*!” STEEVENS.

In order to account for Juliet's having a dagger, or, as it is called in old language, a knife, it is not necessary to have recourse to the ancient accoutrements of brides, how prevalent soever the custom mentioned by Mr. Steevens may have been; for Juliet appears to have furnished herself with this instrument immediately after her father and mother had threatened to force her to marry Paris:

“If all fail else, myself have power to die.”

Accordingly in the very next scene, when she is at the friar's cell, and before she could have been furnished with any of the apparatus of a bride, (not having then consented to marry the count,) she says:

“Give me some present counsel, or behold,

“’Twixt my extremes and me *this bloody knife*

“Shall play the umpire.” MALONE.

I fear, it is : and yet, methinks, it should not,
 For he hath still been tried a holy man :
 I will not entertain so bad a thought.²—
 How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
 I wake before the time that Romeo
 Come to redeem me ? there's a fearful point !
 Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
 To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
 And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes ?
 Or, if I live, is it not very like,
 The horrible conceit of death and night,
 Together with the terror of the place,
 As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,³
 Where, for these many hundred years, the bones
 Of all my buried ancestors are pack'd ;
 Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,⁴
 Lies fest'ring⁵ in his shroud ; where, as they say,
 At some hours in the night spirits resort ;—
 Alack, alack ! is it not like, that I,⁶
 So early waking,—what with loathsome smells ;
 And shrieks like mandrakes' torn out of the earth,
 That living mortals, hearing them, run mad ;
 O ! if I wake, shall I not be distraught,⁷
 Environed with all these hideous fears ?
 And madly play with my forefathers' joints ?
 And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud ?
 And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
 As with a club, dash out my desperate brains ?
 O, look ! methinks, I see my cousin's ghost

Seeking

² This line I have restored. STEEVENS.

³ This idea was probably suggested to our poet by his native place. The charnel at Stratford upon Avon is a very large one, and perhaps contains a greater number of bones than are to be found in any other repository of the same kind in England.—I was furnished with this observation by Mr. Murphy, whose very elegant and spirited defence of Shakspeare against the criticisms of Voltaire is one of the least considerable out of many favours which he has conferred on the literary world. STEEVENS.

⁴ i. e. fresh in earth, newly buried. STEEVENS.

⁵ To *fester* is to corrupt. So, in *K. Edward III.* 1599.

“ Lillies that *fester* smell far worse than weeds.” STEEVENS.

⁶ This speech is confused, and inconsequential, according to the disorder of Juliet's mind. JOHNSON.

⁷ *Distraught* is distracted. STEEVENS.

Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body
Upon a rapier's point :—Stay, Tybalt, stay!—
Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.

[*She throws herself on the bed.*]

SCENE IV.

Capulet's Hall.

Enter Lady CAPULET and NURSE.

La. Cap. Hold, take these keys, and fetch more spices,
nurse.

Nurse. They call for dates and quinces in the pastry.⁸

Enter CAPULET.

Cap. Come, stir, stir, stir! the second cock hath crow'd,
The curfew bell⁹ hath rung, 'tis three o'clock :—

Look

⁸ i. e. in the room where paste was made. So *laundry, spicery, &c.*
MALONE.

On the books of the Stationers' Company in the year 1560, are the following entries :

“Item payed for iiii pound of *dates* iiii s.

“Item payed for xxiiii pounce of *prunys* iii s. viii d.”

STEEVENS.

⁹ I know not that the morning-bell is called the *curfew* in any other place. JOHNSON.

The *curfew* bell was rung at nine in the evening as appears from a passage in *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, 1608 :

“—well 'tis *nine* o'clock, tis time to ring *curfew*.”

STEEVENS.

The *curfew* bell is universally rung at *eight* or *nine* o'clock at night ; generally according to the season. The term is here used with peculiar impropriety, as it is not believed that *any* bell was ever rung so early as *three* in the morning. The derivation of *curfew* is well known, but it is a mere vulgar error that the institution was a badge of slavery imposed by the Norman Conqueror. To *put out the fire* became necessary only because it was time to go to bed : And if the *curfew* commanded all fires to be extinguished, the morning bell ordered them to be lighted again. In short, the ringing of those two bells was a manifest and essential service to people who had scarcely any other means of measuring their time.

Look to the bak'd meats, good Angelica :⁹
Spare not for cost.

Nurse. Go, go, you cot-quean, go,
Get you to bed ; 'faith, you'll be sick to-morrow
For this night's watching.

Cap. No, not a whit ; What ! I have watch'd ere now
All night for lesser cause and ne'er been sick.

La. Cap. Ay, you have been a mouse-hunt² in your
time ;
But I will watch you from such watching now.

[*Exeunt Lady CAPULET and Nurse.*]

Cap. A jealous-hood, a jealous-hood !—Now, fellow,
What's there ?

Enter Servants, with spits, logs, and baskets.

1. *Serv.* Things for the cook, sir ; but I know not what.

Cap. Make haste, make haste. [*Exit Serv.*]—Sirrah, fetch
drier logs ;

Call Peter, he will show thee where they are.

2. *Serv.* I have a head, sir, that will find out logs,
And never trouble Peter for the matter. [*Exit.*]

Cap. 'Mafs, and well said ; A merry whoreson ! ha,
Thou shalt be logger-head.—Good faith, 'tis day :

The

⁹ Shakspeare has here imputed to an Italian nobleman and his lady all the petty sollicitudes of a private house concerning a provincial entertainment. To such a bustle our author might have been witness at home ; but the like anxieties could not well have occurred in the family of Capulet, whose wife, if *Angelica* be her name, is here directed to perform the office of a housekeeper. STEEVENS.

² It appears from a passage in *Hamlet*, that *mouse* was once a term of endearment applied to a woman :

“ Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his *mouse*.”

STEEVENS.

So, in a letter from Alleyn, the celebrated player, to his wife, written in 1593 (now in Dulwich College) :

“ EMANUEL,

“ My good sweet *mouse*, I commend me hartely to you and to my father, my mother, and to my sister Bess, hoping in God, though the sickness be round about you, yett by his mercy itt may escape your house.” &c.

MALONE.

The animal called the *mouse-hunt* is the *martin*. HENLEY.

Cat after kinde, good mouse-hunt, is a proverb. HOLT WHITE.

The county will be here with musick straight,

[*Musick within.*]

For so he said he would. I hear him near:—

Nurse!—Wife!—what, ho!—what, nurse, I say!

Enter NURSE.

Go, waken Juliet, go, and trim her up;

I'll go and chat with Paris:—Hie, make haste,

Make haste! the bridegroom he is come already:

Make haste, I say!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

Juliet's Chamber; Juliet on the bed.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Mistress! — what, mistress! — Juliet! — fast, I warrant her, she:—

Why, lamb! — why, lady! — fie, you slug-abad! —

Why, love, I say! — madam! sweet-heart! — why, bride! —

What, not a word? you take your pennyworths now:

Sleep for a week; for the next night, I warrant,

The county Paris hath set up his rest,⁴

That you shall rest but little. — God forgive me,

(Marry, and amen!) how sound is she asleep!

I needs must wake her: — Madam, madam, madam!

Ay, let the county take you in your bed;

He'll fright you up, i'faith. — Will it not be?

What, drest! and in your cloathes! and down again!

I must

³ This expression, which is frequently employed by the old dramatick writers, is taken from the manner of firing the harquebuss. This was so heavy a gun, that the soldiers were obliged to carry a supporter called a *rest*, which they fixed in the ground before they levelled to take aim.

STEEVENS.

The origin of this phrase has certainly been rightly explained, but the good nurse was here thinking of other matters. T. C.

The above expression may probably be sometimes used in the sense already explained, it is however oftener employed with a reference to the *game at primero*, in which it was one of the terms then in use. To avoid loading the page with examples, I shall refer to *Doddsley's Collection of Old Plays*. Vol. X. p. 364, edit. 1780, where several are brought together. REED.

I must needs wake you : Lady ! lady ! lady !
 Alas ! alas !—Help ! help ! my lady's dead !—
 O, well-a-day, that ever I was born !
 Some aqua-vitæ, ho !—my lord ! my lady :

Enter Lady CAPULET.

La. Cap. What noise is here ?

Nurse. O lamentable day !

La. Cap. What is the matter ?

Nurse. Look, look ! O heavy day !

La. Cap. O me, O me !—my child, my only life,
 Revive, look up, or I will die with thee—
 Help, help !—call help.

Enter CAPULET.

Cap. For shame, bring Juliet forth : her lord is come.

Nurse. She's dead, deceas'd, she's dead ; alack the day !

La. Cap. Alack the day ! she's dead, she's dead, she's dead.

Cap. Ha ! let me see her :—Out, alas ! she's cold :
 Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff ;
 Life and these lips have long been separated :
 Death lies on her, like an untimely frost
 Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.
 Accursed time ! unfortunate old man !

Nurse. O lamentable day !

La. Cap. O woful time !

Cap. Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,
 Ties up my tongue, and will not let me speak.⁴

Enter Friar LAURENCE and PARIS, with Musicians.

Fri. Come, is the bride ready to go to church ?

Cap. Ready to go, but never to return :

O son, the night before thy wedding day
 Hath death lain with thy bride :⁵—See, there she lies,
 Flower

⁴ Our author has here followed the poem closely, without recollecting that he had made Capulet, in this scene, clamorous in his grief. MALONE.

⁵ Euripides has sported with this thought in the same manner. *Iphig.* in *Anal.* ver 460.

“ Τὴνδ' αὖ ταλαιναν παρθενον (τί πάρθενον ;

“ Ἄδης νιν, ὡς ἔοικε, νυμφεύσει τάχα.)” Sir W. RAWLINSON.

Flower as she was, deflowered by him.⁶
 Death is my son-in-law,⁷ death is my heir;
 My daughter he hath wedded ! I will die,
 And leave him all ; life leaving, all is death's.

Par. Have I thought long to see this morning's face,
 And doth it give me such a fight as this ?

La. Cap. Accurs'd, unhappy, wretched, hateful day !
 Most miserable hour, that e'er time saw
 In lasting labour of his pilgrimage !
 But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,
 But one thing to rejoice and solace in,
 And cruel death hath catch'd it from my sight.

Nurse. O woe ! O woful, woful, woful day !
 Most lamentable day ! most woful day,
 That ever, ever, I did yet behold !
 O day ! O day ! O day ! O hateful day !
 Never was seen so black a day as this :
 O woful day, O woful day !

Par. Beguil'd, divorced, wronged, spited, slain !
 Most detestable death, by thee beguil'd,
 By cruel cruel thee quite overthrown !—
 O love ! O life !—not life, but love in death !

Cap. Despis'd, distressed, hated, martyr'd, kill'd !
 Uncomfortable time ! why cam'st thou now
 To murder murder our solemnity ?—
 O child ! O child !—my soul, and not my child !—
 Dead art thou, dead !—alack ! my child is dead ;
 And, with my child, my joys are buried.

Fri. Peace, ho, for shame ! confusion's cure lives not
 In these confusions. Heaven and yourself
 Had part in this fair maid ; now heaven hath all
 And all the better is it for the maid :
 Your part in her you could not keep from death ;

But

⁶ This jingle was common to other writers ; and among the rest, to Greene, in his *Greene in Conceit*, 1598 : “ —a garden-house having round about it many flowers, and within it much deflowering.”

COLLINS.

⁷ The remaining part of this speech, “ death is my heir,” &c. was omitted by Mr. Pope in his edition ; and some of the subsequent editors, following his example, took the same unwarrantable licence. The lines were very properly restored by Mr. Steevens. MALONE.

But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.
 The most you sought was—her promotion:
 For 'twas your heaven, she should be advanc'd;
 And weep ye now, seeing she is advanc'd,
 Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?
 O, in this love, you love your child so ill,
 That you run mad, seeing that she is well:
 She's not well married, that lives married long;
 But she's best married, that dies married young.
 Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary
 On this fair corse; and, as the custom is,
 In all her best array bear her to church:
 For though fond nature bids us all lament,
 Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment.

Cap. All things, that we ordained festival,
 Turn from their office to black funeral:
 Our instruments, to melancholy bells;
 Our wedding cheer, to a sad burial feast;
 Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change;
 Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse,
 And all things change them to the contrary.

Fri. Sir, go you in,—and, madam, go with him;—
 And go, fir Paris;—every one prepare
 To follow this fair corse unto her grave:
 The heavens do low'r upon you, for some ill;
 Move them no more, by crossing their high will.

[*Exeunt* CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, PARIS,
 and FRIAR.

1. *Mus.* 'Faith, we may put up our pipes, and be gone.

Nurse. Honest good fellows, ah, put up, put up;
 For, well you know, this is a pitiful case. [*Exit Nurse.*

1. *Mus.* Ay, by my troth, that case may be amended.

Enter PETER.⁸

Pet. Musicians, O, musicians, *Heart's ease, heart's ease*; O,
 an you will have me live, play—*heart's ease*.

1. *Mus.* Why *heart's ease*?

Pet.

⁸ From the quarto of 1599, it appears that the part of *Peter* was originally performed by *William Kempe*. MALONE.

Pet. O musicians, because my heart itself plays—*My heart is full of woe* :⁹ O play me some merry dump,² to comfort me.

2. Mus. Not a dump we; 'tis no time to play now.

Pet. You will not then.

Mus. No.

Pet. I will then give it you soundly.

1. Mus. What will you give us?

Pet. No money, on my faith; but the gleek :³ I will give you the minstrel.⁴

1. Mus. Then will I give you the serving-creature.

Pet.

⁹ This is the burthen of the first stanza of *A pleasant new Ballad of Two Lovers* :

“Hey hoe! *my heart is full of woe.*” STEEVENS.

² A dump anciently signified *some kind of dance*, as well as *sorrow*. But on this occasion it means a mournful song. STEEVENS.

Dumps were heavy mournful tunes; possibly indeed *any sort* of movements were once so called, as we sometimes meet with a *merry dump*. Hence *doleful dumps*, deep sorrow, or grievous affliction, as in the next page, and in the less ancient ballad, of *Chevy Chase*. It is still said of a person uncommonly sad, that he is in the dumps.

In a Ms. of Henry the eighth's time, now among the King's Collection in the Museum, is a tune for the cittern, or guitar, intitled, “*My lady Careys dompe* ;” there is also “*The duke of Somersettes domp* ;” as we now say, “*Lady Coventry's Minuet*,” &c. “If thou wert not some blockish and senseless dolt, thou wouldest never laugh when I sung a heavy mixt-Lybian tune, or a note to a *dumpe* or dolefull dittie.” Plutarch's *Morals*, by Holland, 1602. p. 61. RITSON.

At the end of *The Secretaries Studie*, by Thomas Gainsford, esq. 4to. 1616, is a long poem of forty-seven stanzas, and called *A Dumpe or Passion*. REED.

³ To *gleek* is to scoff. The term is taken from an ancient game called *g'eeke*. STEEVENS.

The use of this cant term is no where explained; and in all probability cannot, at this distance of time, be recovered. To *gleek* however signified to put a joke or trick upon a person, perhaps to *jest* according to the coarse humour of that age. RITSON.

⁴ Shakspeare's pun has here remained unnoticed. A *Gleekman* or *Gligman*, as Dr. Percy has shown, signified a *minstrel*. See his Essay on the antient English Minstrels, p. 55. The word *gleek* here signifies *scorn*, as Mr. Steevens has already observed; and is as he says, borrowed from the old game so called, the method of playing which may be seen in Skinner's Etymologicon, in voce, and also in the Compleat Gamester, 2d edit. 1676, p. 90. DOUCE.

Pet. Then will I lay the serving-creature's dagger on your pate. I will carry no crotchets: I'll *re* you, I'll *fa* you; Do you note me?

1. *Mus.* An you *re* us, and *fa* us, you note us.

2. *Mus.* Pray you, put up your dagger, and put out your wit.

Pet. Then have at you with my wit; I will dry-beat you with an iron wit, and put up my iron dagger:—Answer me like men:

*When griping grief⁹ the heart doth wound,
And doleful dumps the mind oppress,
Then musick, with her silver sound;*

Why, *silver sound*? why, *musick with her silver sound*?
What say you, Simon Catling?²

1. *Mus.* Marry, fir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

Pet. Pretty! What say you, Hugh Rebeck?³

2. *Mus.* I say—*silver sound*, because musicians sound for silver.

Pet. Pretty too!—What say you, James Soundpost?

3. *Mus.*

From the following entry on the books of the Stationers' Company, in the year 1560, it appears that the hire of a *parson* was cheaper than that of a *minstrel* or a *cook*:

“Item, payd to the preacher vi s. iid.

“Item, payd to the minstrell xii s.

“Item, payd to the coke xv s.” STEEVENS.

⁹ The epithet *griping* was by no means likely to excite laughter at the time it was written. Lord Surrey, in his translation of the second book of Virgil's *Æneid*, makes the hero say:

“New gripes of dread then pearse our trembling brestes.”

Dr Percy thinks that the questions of Peter are designed as a ridicule on the forced and unnatural explanations too often given by us painful editors of ancient authors. STEEVENS.

² A *catling* was a small lute-string made of *catgut*. STEEVENS.

In an historical account of taxes under all denominations in the time of William and Mary, p. 336, is the following article: “For every gross of *catlings* and lute-string,” &c. A. C.

³ The fidler is so called from an instrument with three strings, which is mentioned by several of the old writers. *Rebec*, *rebecquin*. See Menage, in v. *Rebec*. So, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*: “—’Tis present death for these fiders to tune their *rebecks* before the great Turk's grace.” STEEVENS.

3. *Mus.* 'Faith, I know not what to say.

Pet. O, I cry you mercy! you are the finger: I will say for you. It is—*musick with her silver sound*, because such fellows as you have feldom gold for founding:—

Then musick with her silver sound,

With speedy help doth lend redress. [Exit, singing.

1. *Mus.* What a pestilent knave is this same?

2. *Mus.* Hang him, Jack! Come, we'll in here; tarry for the mourners, and stay dinner. [Exeunt.

ACT V.⁴ SCENE I.

Mantua. A Street.

Enter ROMEO.

Rom. If I may trust the flattering eye of sleep,⁵

My

⁴ The acts are here properly enough divided, nor did any better distribution than the editors have already made, occur to me in the perusal of this play: yet it may not be improper to remark, that in the first folio, and I suppose the foregoing editions are in the same state, there is no division of the acts, and therefore some future editor may try, whether any improvement can be made, by reducing them to a length more equal, or interrupting the action at more proper intervals. JOHNSON.

⁵ Thus the earliest copy. meaning, perhaps, if I may trust to what I saw in my sleep. The folio reads:

If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep;

which is explained, as follows, by Dr. Johnson. STEEVENS.

The sense is, *If I may trust the honesty of sleep*, which I know however not to be so nice as not often to practise flattery. JOHNSON.

The sense seems rather to be—"If I may repose any confidence in the flattering visions of the night."

Whether the former word ought to supersede the more modern one, let the reader determine: it appears to me, however, the most easily intelligible of the two. STEEVENS.

i. e. If I may confide in those delightful visions which I have seen while asleep. The precise meaning of the word *flattering* here, is ascertained by a former passage in Act II:

"——all this is but a dream,

"Too flattering-sweet to be substantial."

By

My dreams presage some joyful news at hand :
 My bosom's lord⁶ fits lightly in his throne ;
 And, all this day, an unaccustom'd spirit
 Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
 I dreamt, my lady came and found me dead ;
 (Strange dream ! that gives a dead man leave to think,)
 And breath'd such life with kisses in my lips,
 That I reviv'd, and was an emperor.
 Ah me ! how sweet is love itself possess'd,
 When but love's shadows are so rich in joy ?

Enter BALTHASAR.

News from Verona !—How now, Balthasar ?
 Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar ?
 How doth my lady ? Is my father well ?

How

By *the eye of sleep* Shakspeare, I think, rather meant the visual power, which a man asleep is enabled by the aid of imagination to exercise, than the eye of *the god of sleep*.

Otway, to obtain a clearer sense than that furnished by the words which Dr. Johnson has interpreted, reads, less poetically than the original copy, which he had probably never seen, but with nearly the same meaning :

If I may trust the *flattery* of sleep,
 My dreams presage some joyful news at hand :

and Mr. Pope has followed him.

In this note I have said, that I thought Shakspeare *by the eye of sleep* meant the visual power which a man asleep is enabled by the aid of imagination to exercise, rather than the eye of the *God of sleep* : but a line in *King Richard III.* which at the same time strongly supports the reading of the old copy which has been adopted in the text, now inclines me to believe that the eye of the god of sleep was meant :

“ My friend, I spy some pity in thy looks ;

“ O, if thy *eye* be not a *flatterer*,

“ Come thou on my side, and entreat for me.” MALONE.

⁶ These three lines are very gay and pleasing. But why does Shakspeare give Romeo this involuntary cheerfulness just before the extremity of unhappiness ? Perhaps to show the vanity of trusting to those uncertain and casual exaltations or depressions, which many consider as certain foretokens of good and evil. JOHNSON.

The poet has explained this passage himself a little further on :

“ How oft, when men are at the point of death,

“ Have they been merry ? which their keepers call

“ A lightning before death.” STEEVENS.

How fares my Juliet? That I ask again;
For nothing can be ill, if she be well.

Bal. Then she is well, and nothing can be ill;
Her body sleeps in Capels' monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives;
I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,
And presently took post to tell it you:
O pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

Rom. Is it even so? then I defy you, stars!—
Thou know'st my lodging: get me ink and paper,
And hire post-horses; I will hence to-night.

Bal. Pardon me, sir, I will not leave you thus:
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure.

Rom. Tush, thou art deceiv'd;
Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do:
Hast thou no letters to me from the friar?

Bal. No, my good lord.

Rom. No matter: Get thee gone,
And hire those horses; I'll be with thee straight.

[Exit BALTHASAR.]

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to night.
Let's see for means:—O, mischief! thou art swift
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!
I do remember an apothecary,—
And hereabouts he dwells,—whom late I noted
In tatter'd weeds, with overwhelming brows,
Culling of simples; meager were his looks,
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones:
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,
An alligator stuff'd,⁶ and other skins

Of

⁶ It appears from Nashe's *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, 1596, that a stuff'd alligator, in Shakspeare's time, made part of the furniture of an apothecary's shop. "He made (says Nashe,) an anatomie of a rat, and after hanged her over his head, instead of an apothecary's crocodile, or dried alligator." MALONE.

I was many years ago assured, that formerly when an apothecary first engaged with his druggist, he was gratuitously furnished by him with these articles of show, which were then imported for that use only. I have

Of ill-shap'd fishes; and about his shelves
A beggarly account of empty boxes,⁷
Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty feeds,
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses;
Were thinly scatter'd to make up a show.

this penury, to myself I said—
An if a man⁸ did need a poison now,
Whose sale is present death in Mantua,
Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.
O, this same thought did but fore-run my need;
And this same needy man must sell it me.
As I remember, this should be the house:
Being holiday, the beggar's shop is shut.—
What, ho! apothecary!

Enter Apothecary.

Ap. Who calls so loud?

Rom. Come hither, man.—I see, that thou art poor;
Hold, there is forty ducats: let me have
A dram of poison; such soon-speeding geer,
As will disperse itself through all the veins,
That the life-weary taker may fall dead;
And that the trunk may be discharg'd of breath
As violently, as hasty powder fir'd
Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.

Ap. Such mortal drugs I have; but Mantua's law
Is death, to any he that utters them.

Rom. Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness,

And

met with the alligator, tortoise, &c. hanging up in the shop of an ancient apothecary at Limehouse, as well as in places more remote from our metropolis. See Hogarth's *Marriage Alamode*, Plate III.—It may be remarked, however, that the apothecaries dismissed their alligators, &c. some time before the physicians were willing to part with their amber-headed canes and solemn periwigs. STEEVENS.

⁷ Dr. Warburton would read, a *braggartly* account; but *beggarly* is probably right; if the *boxes* were *empty*, the *account* was more *beggarly*, as it was more pompous. JOHNSON.

⁸ This phraseology which means simply—*If*, was not unfrequent in Shakspeare's time and before. Thus, in Lodge's *Illustrations*, Vol. I. p. 85: "—meanys was maid unto me to see *an yf* I wold appoynt" &c.

REED.

And fear'st to die ? famine is in thy cheeks,
Need and oppression starveth in thy eyes,⁹
Upon thy back hangs ragged misery,
The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law :
The world affords no law to make thee rich ;
Then be not poor, but break it, and take this.

Ap. My poverty, but not my will consents.

Rom. I pay thy poverty, and not thy will.

Ap. Put this in any liquid thing you will,
And drink it off; and, if you had the strength
Of twenty men, it would despatch you straight.

Rom. There is thy gold ; worse poison to men's souls,
Doing more murders in this loathsome world,
Than these poor compounds that thou may'st not sell :
I sell thee poison, thou hast sold me none,
Farewell ; buy food, and get thyself in flesh.—
Come, cordial, and not poison ; go with me
To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter Friar JOHN.

John. Holy Franciscan friar ! brother, ho !

Enter Friar LAURENCE.

Lau. This same should be the voice of friar John.—
Welcome

⁹ The passage might, perhaps, be better regulated thus:

Need and oppression *stareth* in thy eyes.

For they cannot, properly, be said to *starve* in his eyes ; though *starved* famine may be allowed to dwell in his cheeks. *Thy*, not *thine*, is the reading of the folio, and those who are conversant in our author, and especially in the old copies, will scarcely notice the grammatical impropriety of the proposed emendation. RITSON.

The modern reading was introduced by Mr. Pope, and was founded on that of Otway, in whose *Caius Marius* the line is thus exhibited :

“ Need and oppression *stareth* in thy eyes.”

The word *starved* in the first copy shows that *starveth* in the text is right. MALONE.

Welcome from Mantua : What says Romeo ?

Or, if his mind be writ, give me his letter.

John. Going to find a bare-foot brother out,
One of our order, to associate me,²
Here in this city visiting the sick,
And finding him, the searchers of the town,
Suspecting, that we both were in a house
Where the infectious pestilence did reign,
Seal'd up the doors, and would not let us forth ;
So that my speed to Mantua there was stay'd.

Lau. Who bare my letter then to Romeo ?

John. I could not send it,—here it is again,—
Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,
So fearful were they of infection.

Lau. Unhappy fortune ! by my brotherhood,
The letter was not nice,³ but full of charge,

OF

² Each friar has always a companion assigned him by the superior when he asks leave to go out ; and thus, says Baretti, they are a check upon each other. STEEVENS.

In *The Visitatio Notabilis de Seleburne*, a curious record printed in *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, Wykeham enjoins the canons not to go abroad without leave from the Prior, who is ordered on such occasions to assign the brother a companion, *ne suspicio sinistra vel scandalum oriatur*. *Append.* p. 448. HOLT WHITE.

Our author having occasion for friar John, has here departed from the poem, and supposed the pestilence to rage at Verona, instead of Mantua.

Friar John sought for a brother merely for the sake of form, to accompany him in his walk, and had no intention of visiting the sick ; the words therefore, *to associate me*, must be considered as parenthetical, and *Here in this city*, &c. must refer to the bare-foot brother.

I formerly conjectured that the passage ought to be regulated thus :

Going to find a bare-foot brother out,
One of our order, to associate me,
And finding him, the searchers of the town
Here in this city visiting the sick, &c.

But the text is certainly right. The searchers would have had no ground of suspicion, if neither of the friars had been in an infected house. MALONE.

³ i. e. was not written on a trivial or idle subject.

Nice signifies *foolish* in many parts of Gower and Chaucer.

The learned editor of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, 1775, observes, that H. Stephens informs us, that *nice* was the old French word for *niais*, one of the synonymes of *fool*. Apol. Herod. l. i. c. 4. STEEVENS.

Of dear import; and the neglecting it
May do much danger: Friar John, go hence;
Get me an iron crow, and bring it straight
Unto my cell.

John. Brother, I'll go and bring't thee.

[*Exit.*

Lau. Now must I to the monument alone;
Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake;
She will beshrew me much, that Romeo
Hath had no notice of these accidents:
But I will write again to Mantua,
And keep her at my cell till Romeo come;
Poor living corse, clos'd in a dead man's tomb!

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Church-yard; in it, a monument belonging to the Capulets.

Enter PARIS, and his Page, bearing flowers and a torch.

Par. Give me thy torch boy: Hence, and stand aloof;—
Yet put it out, for I would not be seen.
Under yon yew-trees lay thee all along,
Holding thine ear close to the hollow ground;
So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread,
(Being loose, unfirm, with digging up of graves,)
But thou shalt hear it: whistle then to me,
As signal that thou hear'st something approach.
Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

Page. I am almost afraid to stand alone
Here in the churchyard; yet I will adventure.

[*Retires.*

Par. Sweet flower, with flowers I strew thy bridal bed:
Sweet tomb, that in thy circuit dost contain
The perfect model of eternity;
Fair Juliet, that with angels dost remain,⁴

Accept

⁴ These four lines from the old edition. POPE.

The folio has these lines:

“ Sweet flow'r, with flow'rs thy bridal bed I strew;
“ O woe! thy canopy is dust and stones,
“ Which with sweet water nightly I will dew,
“ Or, wanting that, with tears distill'd by moans.
“ The obsequies that I for thee will keep,
“ Nightly shall be, to strew thy grave, and weep.”

Accept this latest favour at my hands ;
That living honour'd thee, and, being dead,
With funeral praises do adorn thy tomb !

[The boy whistles.

The boy gives warning, something doth approach.

What cursed foot wanders this way to-night,

To cross my obsequies, and true love's rites ?

What, with a torch ! muffle me, night, a while.⁵ [retires.

Enter ROMEO and BALTHASAR with a torch, mattock, &c.

Rom. Give me that mattock, and the wrenching iron.

Hold, take this letter ; early in the morning

See thou deliver it to my lord and father.

Give me the light : Upon thy life I charge thee,

Whate'er thou hear'st or see'st, stand all aloof,

And do not interrupt me in my course.

Why I descend into this bed of death,

Is, partly, to behold my lady's face :

But, chiefly, to take thence from her dead finger

A precious ring ; a ring, that I must use

In dear employment :⁶ therefore hence, be gone :—

But if thou, jealous, dost return to pry

In what I further shall intend to do,

By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint,

And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs :

The time and my intents are savage-wild ;

More fierce, and more inexorable far,

Than empty tigers, or the roaring sea.

Bal. I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

Rom. So shalt thou show me friendship.—Take thou that :
Live, and be prosperous ; and farewell, good fellow.

Bal.

⁵ *Muffle* was not become a low word even in the time of Milton, as the Elder Brother in *Comus* uses it :

“ *Unmuffle, ye faint stars,*” &c.

A *muffler*, as I have already observed, was a part of female dress.

STEEVENS.

⁶ That is, *action of importance*. Gems were supposed to have great powers and virtues. JOHNSON.

Ben Jonson uses the word *dear* in the same sense :

“ Put your known talents on so *dear* a business.”

Catiline, Act I.

Bal. For all this fame, I'll hide me hereabout ;
His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt. [Retires.]

Rom. Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,
Gorg'd with the dearest morsel of the earth,
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,
[breaking open the door of the monument.]
And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food!

Par. This is that banish'd haughty Montague,
That murder'd my love's cousin ;—with which grief,
It is supposed, the fair creature died,—
And here is come to do some villainous shame
To the dead bodies: I will apprehend him.— [Advances.]
Stop thy unhallow'd toil, vile Montague ;
Can vengeance be pursu'd further than death ?
Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee :
Obey, and go with me ; for thou must die.

Rom. I must, indeed ; and therefore came I hither.—
Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man,
Fly hence and leave me ;—think upon these gone ;
Let them affright thee.—I beseech thee, youth,
Heap not another sin upon my head,
By urging me to fury :—O, be gone !
By heaven, I love thee better than myself ;
For I come hither arm'd against myself ;
Stay not, be gone ;—live, and hereafter say—
A madman's mercy bade thee run away.

Par. I do defy thy conjurations,⁷
And do attach thee as a felon here.

Rom. Wilt thou provoke me ? then have at thee boy.
[They fight.]
Page.

⁷ Paris conceived Romeo to have burst open the monument for no other purpose than to do *some villainous shame* on the dead bodies, such as witches are reported to have practised ; and therefore tells him he defies him, and the magick arts which he suspects he is preparing to use. The folio reads :

I do defy thy commiseration.

One of the ancient senses of the verb—to *defy*, was to *refuse* or *deny*.

Paris may, however, mean—I refuse to do as thou *conjurest* me to do.
i. e. to depart. STEEVENS.

Page. O lord! they fight: I will go call the watch.

[*Exit Page.*]

Par. O, I am slain! [*falls.*]—If thou be merciful,
Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet.

[*Dies.*]

Rom. In faith, I will:—Let me peruse this face;—
Mercutio's kinsman, noble county Paris:
What said my man, when my betossed soul
Did not attend him as we rode? I think,
He told me, Paris should have married Juliet:
Said he not so? or did I dream it so?
Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,
To think it was so?—O, give me thy hand,
One writ with me in sour misfortune's book!
I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave,—
A grave? O, no; a lantern,⁸ slaughter'd youth,
For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
This vault a feasting presence⁹ full of light.
Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interr'd.²

[*Laying Paris in the monument.*]

How oft when men are at the point of death,
Have they been merry? which their keepers call
A lightning before death: O, how may I

Call

⁸ A *lantern* may not, in this instance, signify an enclosure for a lighted candle, but a *louvre*, or what in ancient records is styled *lanternium*, i. e. a spacious round or octagonal turret full of windows, by means of which cathedrals, and sometimes halls, are illuminated. See the beautiful *lantern* at Fly Minster. STEEVENS.

⁹ A *presence* is a public room. JOHNSON.

A *presence* means a public room, which is at times the *presence-chamber* of the sovereign. So, in *The Noble Gentleman*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, Jacques says, his master is a duke,

“His chamber hung with nobles, like a *presence*.”

M. MASON.

² Romeo being now determined to put an end to his life, considers himself as already dead. MALONE.

Till I read the preceding note, I supposed Romeo meant, that he placed Paris by the side of *Tybalt* who was already dead, and buried in the same monument. The idea, however, of a man's receiving burial from a dead undertaker, is but too like some of those miserable conceits with which our author too frequently counteracts his own pathos. STEEVENS.

Call this a lightning?³—O, my love! my wife!
 Death that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
 Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
 Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet
 Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,
 And death's pale flag is not advanced there.⁴—
 Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?
 O, what more favour can I do to thee,
 Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain,
 To funder his that was thine enemy?
 Forgive me, cousin!—Ah, dear Juliet,
 Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
 That unsubstantial death is amorous;
 And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
 For fear of that, I will still stay with thee;
 And never from this palace of dim night
 Depart again; here, here will I remain
 With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here
 Will I set up my everlasting rest;
 And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
 From this world-wearied flesh.—Eyes, look your last!
 Arms, take your last embrace! and lips, O you
 The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss

A date

³ I think we should read,

——— O, now may I

Call this a lightning?—— JOHNSON.

How is certainly right and proper. Romeo had, just before, been in high spirits, a symptom, which he observes, was sometimes called a *lightning* before death: but how says he (for no situation can exempt Shakspeare's characters from the vice of punning) can I term this *sad* and *gloomy* prospect a *lightning*? RITSON.

The reading of the text is that of the quarto, 1599. The first copy reads: *But how, &c.* which shows that Dr. Johnson's emendation cannot be right. MALONE.

⁴ An ingenious friend some time ago pointed out to me a passage of *Marini*, which bears a very strong resemblance to this:

Morte la'nsegna sua pallida e bianca

Vincitrice spiegó su'l volto mio.

Rime lugubri, p. 149, edit. Venet. 1605.

O 5

TYRWHITT.

A dateless bargain to engrossing death!⁵

Come, bitter conduct, come unfavoury guide!

Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on

The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!

Here's to my love!—*[drinks.]* O, true apothecary!

Thy drugs are quick.—Thus with a kiss I die. *[Dies.]*

Enter, at the other end of the churchyard, Friar LAURENCE, with a lantern, crow, and spade.

Fri. Saint Francis be my speed! how oft to night
Have my old feet stumbled at graves?⁶—Who's there?
Who is it that comforts, so late, the dead?

Bal. Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you well.

Fri. Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,
What torch is yond', that vainly lends his light
To grubs and eyeless skulls? as I discern,
It burneth in the Capel's monument.

Bal. It doth so, holy fir; and there's my master
One that you love.

Fri. Who is it?

Bal. Romeo.

Fri. How long hath he been there?

Bal. Full half an hour.

Fri. Go with me to the vault.

Bal. I dare not, fir:

My master knows not, but I am gone hence;

And fearfully did menace me with death,

If I did stay to look on his intents.

Fri. Stay then, I'll go alone:—Fear comes upon me;
O, much I fear some ill unlucky thing.

Bal. As I did sleep under this yew-tree here,
I dreamt my master and another fought,⁷

And

⁵ *Engrossing* seems to be used here in its clerical sense. MALONE.

⁶ This accident was reckoned ominous. STEEVENS.

⁷ This is one of the touches of nature that would have escaped the hand of any painter less attentive to it than Shakspeare. What happens to a person while he is under the manifest influence of fear, will seem to him when he is recovered from it, like a dream. Homer, Book 8th, represents Rhesus dying fast asleep, and as it were beholding his enemy in a dream plunging a sword into his bosom. Eustathius and Dacier both applaud this image as very natural; for a man in such a condition, says Mr. Pope, awakes no further than to see confusedly what environs him, and to think it not a reality, but a vision. STEEVENS.

And that my master slew him.

Fri.

Romeo?—

[*Advances.*

Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains

The stony entrance of this sepulchre?—

What mean these masterless and gory swords

To lie discolour'd by this place of peace?

[*Enters the monument.*

Romeo! O, pale!—What else? what, Paris too?

And steep'd in blood?—Ah, what an unkind hour

Is guilty of this lamentable chance!—

The lady stirs.⁸

[*JULIET wakes and stirs.*

Jul. O comfortable friar! where is my lord?

I do remember well where I should be,

And there I am:—Where is my Romeo?

[*Noise within.*

Fri. I hear some noise.—Lady, come from that nest

Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep;⁹

A greater Power than we can contradict

Hath thwarted our intents; come, come away:

Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;²

And Paris too; come, I'll dispose of thee

Among a sisterhood of holy nuns:

Stay not to question, for the watch is coming;³

Come

⁸ In the alteration of this play now exhibited on the stage, Mr. Garrick appears to have been indebted to Otway, who, perhaps without any knowledge of the story as told by Da Porto and Bandello, does not permit his hero to die before his wife awakes. MALONE.

⁹ Shakspeare alludes to the sleep of Juliet, which was *unnatural*, being brought on by drugs. STEEVENS.

² Shakspeare has been arraigned for departing from the Italian novel, in making Romeo die before Juliet awakes from her trance; and thus losing a happy opportunity of introducing an affecting scene between these unfortunate lovers. But he undoubtedly had never read the Italian novel or any *literal* translation of it, and was misled by the poem of *Romeus and Juliet*, the author of which departed from the Italian story, making the poison take effect on Romeo before Juliet awakes. MALONE.

³ It has been objected that there is no such establishment in any of the cities of Italy. Shakspeare seldom scrupled to give the manners and usages of his own country to others. In this particular instance the old poem was his guide;

“The weary watch discharg'd did hie them home to sleep.”

Come, go, good Juliet,—[*Noise again.*] I dare stay no longer.
[*Exit.*]

Jul. Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.—
What's here? a cup, clos'd in my true love's hand?
Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end:—
O churl! drink all and leave no friendly drop,
To help me after?—I will kiss thy lips;
Haply, some poison yet doth hang on them,
To make me die with a restorative. [Kisses him.]
Thy lips are warm!

i. Watch. [*within.*] Lead, boy;—Which way?

Jul. Yea, noise?—Then I'll be brief.—O happy dagger!
[Snatching ROMEO's dagger.⁴]
This is thy sheath; [*stabs herself.*] there rust, and let me die.
[Falls on ROMEO's body, and dies.]

Enter Watch, with the Page of Paris.

Page. This is the place; there, where the torch doth burn.

i. Watch. The ground is bloody; Search about the churchyard:

Go, some of you, who e'er you find, attach.

[*Exeunt some.*]

Pitiful sight! here lies the county slain;—
And Juliet bleeding; warm, and newly dead,
Who here hath lain these two days buried.—
Go, tell the prince,—run to the Capulet's,—

Raise

In *Much ado about Nothing*, where the scene lies at Messina, our author has also introduced *Watchmen*; though without suggestion from any dull poem like that referred to on the present occasion.

See, however, *Othello*, Act I. Scene II; in which Mr. Malone appears to contradict, on the strongest evidence, the present assertion relative to there being *no watch in Italy*. STEEVENS.

⁴ So, in Painter's translation of *Pierre Boistreau*, tom. ii. p. 244: "Drawing out the dagger which Romeo wore by his side, she pricked herself with many blowes against the heart." STEEVENS.

It is clear that in this and most other places Shakspeare followed the poem, and not Painter, for Painter describes Romeo's dagger as hanging at *his side*; whereas the poem is silent as to the place where it hung, and our author, governed by the fashion of his own time, supposes it to have hung at Romeo's *back*. MALONE.

Raise up the Montagues,—some others search ;—⁵

[*Exeunt other watchmen.*]

We see the ground whereon these woes do lie ;

But the true ground of all these piteous woes,

We cannot without circumstance descry.

Enter some of the Watch, with Balthasar.

2. *Watch.* Here's Romeo's man, we found him in the churchyard.

1. *Watch.* Hold him in safety, till the prince come hither.

Enter another Watchman, with Friar LAURENCE.

3. *Watch.* Here is a friar, that trembles, sighs, and weeps :

We took this mattock and this spade from him,

As he was coming from this churchyard side.

1. *Watch.* A great suspicion ; Stay the friar too.

Enter the Prince and Attendants.

Prince. What misadventure is so early up,
That calls our person from our morning's rest ?

Enter CAPULET, Lady CAPULET, and others.

Cap. What should it be, that they so shriek abroad ?

La. Cap. The people in the street cry—Romeo,
Some—Juliet, and some Paris ; and all run,
With open outcry, toward our monument.

Prince. What fear is this, which startles in our ears ?⁶

1. *Watch.*

⁵ Here seems to be a rhyme intended, which may be easily restored :

“ Raise up the Montagues. Some others, go.

“ We see the ground whereon these woes do lie,

“ But the true ground of all *this* piteous *woe*

“ We cannot without circumstance descry.” JOHNSON.

It was often thought sufficient, in the time of Shakspeare, for the second and fourth lines in a stanza, to rhyme with each other.

It were to be wished that an apology as sufficient could be offered for this watchman's quibble between *ground*, the earth, and *ground*, the fundamental cause. STEEVENS.

⁶ The old copies read—in *your* ears. The emendation was made by Dr. Johnson. MALONE.

1. *Watch*. Sovereign, here lies the county Paris slain;
And Romeo dead; and Juliet, dead before,
Warm and new kill'd.

Prince. Search, seek, and know how this foul murder
comes.

1. *Watch*. Here is a friar, and slaughter'd Romeo's man;
With instruments upon them fit to open
These dead men's tombs.

Cap. O, heavens!—O, wife! look how our daughter
bleeds!

This dagger hath mista'en,—for, lo! his house
Is empty on the back of Montague,—
And it mis-sheathed in my daughter's bosom.⁷

La. Cap. O me! this sight of death is as a bell,
That warns my old age to a sepulchre.

Enter

⁷ The modern editors (contrary to the authority of all the ancient copies, and without attention to the disagreeable assonance of *sheath* and *sheathed*, which was first introduced by Mr. Pope) read:

“This dagger hath mista'en: for, lo! the *sheath*

“*Lies* empty on the back of Montague,

“*The point* mis-sheathed in my daughters bosom.”

The quarto, 1597, erroneously,

“—this dagger hath mistooke,

“For (loe) the backe is empty of yong Mountague,

“And it *is* sheathed in our daughter's breast.”

The quarto, 1599, seems to afford the true reading:

“This dagger hath mistane, for, loe! his house

“Is emptie on the back of Montague,

“And it mis-sheathd in my daughter's bosome.”

If we do not read—it instead of *is*, Capulet will be made to say—*The scabbard is at once empty on the back of Montague, and sheathed in Juliet's bosom.*

Shakspeare quaintly represents the dagger as having mistaken its place, and “*it* mis-sheathed,” i. e. “mis-sheathed *itself*” in the bosom of Juliet.

The quarto, 1609, and the folio, 1623, offer the same reading, except that they concur in giving *is* instead of *it*.

It appears that the *dagger* was anciently worn *behind the back*.

In *Humor's Ordinarie*, &c. an ancient collection of satires, no date:

“See you the huge bum dagger at his backe?”

The epithet applied to the dagger, shows at what part of the back it was worn. STEEVENS.

The words, “*for, lo! his house is empty on the back of Montague,*” are to be considered as parenthetical. MALONE.

Enter MONTAGUE and Others.

Prince. Come, Montague; for thou art early up,⁸
To see thy son and heir more early down.

Mon. Alas, my liege, my wife is dead to-night;⁹
Grief of my son's exile hath stopp'd her breath:
What further woe conspires against mine age?

Prince. Look, and thou shalt see.

Mon. O thou untaught! what manners is in this,
To press before thy father to a grave?

Prince. Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while,
'Till we can clear these ambiguities,
And know their spring, their head, their true descent;
And then will I be general of your woes,
And lead you even to death: Mean time forbear,
And let mischance be slave to patience.—
Bring forth the parties of suspicion.

Fri. I am the greatest, able to do least,
Yet most suspected, as the time and place
Doth make against me, of this direful murder;
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge
Myself condemned and myself excus'd.

Prince. Then say at once what thou dost know in this.

Fri. I will be brief,² for my short date of breath

Is

⁸ This speech (as appears from the following passage in *The Second Part of the Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington*, 1601) has something proverbial in it:

“In you i'faith, the proverb's verified,

“*You are early up, and yet are ne'er the near.*” STEEVENS.

⁹ After this line the quarto, 1597, adds,

“And young Benvolio is deceased too.”

But this, I suppose, the poet rejected, on his revision of the play, as unnecessary slaughter. STEEVENS.

The line, which gives an account of Benvolio's death, was probably thrown in to account for his absence from this interesting scene.

RITSON.

² It is much to be lamented, that the poet did not conclude the dialogue with the action, and avoid a narrative of events which the audience already knew. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare was led into this uninteresting narrative by following too closely *The Tragicall History of Romeus and Juliet*. MALONE.

Is not so long as is a tedious tale.³

Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet;
 And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife;
 I married them; and their stolen marriage-day
 Was Tybalt's dooms-day, whose untimely death
 Banish'd the new-made bridegroom from this city;
 For whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pin'd.
 You—to remove that siege of grief from her,—
 Betroth'd, and would have married her perforce,
 To county Paris :—Then comes she to me;
 And, with wild looks, bid me devise some means
 To rid her from this second marriage,
 Or, in my cell there would she kill herself.
 Then gave I her, so tutor'd by my art,
 A sleeping potion; which so took effect
 As I intended, for it wrought on her
 The form of death: meantime I writ to Romeo,
 That he should hither come as this dire night,
 To help to take her from her borrow'd grave,
 Being the time the potion's force should cease.
 But he which bore my letter, friar John,
 Was staid by accident; and yesternight
 Return'd my letter back: Then all alone,
 At the prefixed hour of her waking,
 Came I to take her from her kindred's vault;
 Meaning to keep her closely at my cell,
 Till I conveniently could send to Romeo:
 But, when I came, (some minute ere the time
 Of her awakening,) here untimely lay
 The noble Paris, and true Romeo, dead.
 She wakes; and I entreated her come forth,
 And bear this work of heaven with patience:
 But then a noise did scare me from the tomb;
 And she, too desperate, would not go with me,

But,

In this poem the bodies of the dead are removed to a publick scaffold, and from that elevation is the Friar's narrative delivered. The same circumstance, as I have already observed, is introduced in *Hamlet*.

STEEVENS.

³ So in the 91st *Psalms*: “—when thou art angry, all our days are gone; we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told.”

But (as it seems,) did violence on herself.
All this I know; and to the marriage
Her nurse is privy: And, if aught in this
Miscarried by my fault, let my old life
Be sacrific'd, some hour before his time,
Unto the rigour of severest law.

Prince. We still have known thee for a holy man.—
Where's Romeo's man? what can he say in this?

Bal. I brought my master news of Juliet's death;
And then in post he came from Mantua,
To this same place, to this same monument.
'This letter he early bid me give his father;
And threaten'd me with death, going in the vault,
If I departed not, and left him there.

Prince. Give me the letter, I will look on it.—
Where is the county's page, that rais'd the watch?—
Sirrah, what made your master in this place?

Page. He came with flowers to strew his lady's grave;
And bid me stand aloof, and so I did:
Anon, comes one with light to ope the tomb;
And, by and by, my master drew on him;
And then I ran away to call the watch.

Prince. This letter doth make good the friar's words,
Their course of love, the tidings of her death:
And here he writes—that he did buy a poison
Of a poor 'pothecary, and therewithal
Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.—
Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!—
See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
And I, for winking at your discords too,
Have lost a brace of kinsmen:⁴—all are punish'd.

Cap. O, brother Montague, give me thy hand:

This

⁴ Mercutio and Paris: Mercutio is expressly called the prince's kinsman in Act III. sc. iv. and that Paris also was the prince's kinsman may be inferred from the following passages. Capulet, speaking of the count in the fourth act, describes him as "a gentleman of princely parentage," and, after he is killed, Romeo says,

"———Let me peruse this face;

"*Mercutio's kinsman, noble county Paris.*" MALONE.

'This is my daughter's jointure, for no more
Can I demand.

Mon. But I can give thee more :
For I will raise her statue in pure gold ;
That, while Verona by that name is known,
There shall no figure at such rate be set,
As that of true and faithful Juliet.

Cap. As rich shall Romeo by his lady lie ;
Poor sacrifices of our enmity !

Prince. A glooming peace⁵ this morning with it brings ;
'The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head :
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things ;
Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished :⁶
For never was a story of more woe,
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.⁷

⁵ To *gloom* is an ancient verb used by Spenser ; and I meet with it likewise in the play of *Tom Tyler and his Wife*, 1661 :

“ If either he gaspeth or *gloometh*.” STEEVENS.

Gloomy is the reading of the old copy in 1597 ; for which *glooming* was substituted in that of 1599. MALONE.

⁶ This seems to be not a resolution in the *prince*, but a reflection on the various dispensations of Providence ; for who was there that could justly be punished by any human law ? EDWARDS'S MSS.

This line has reference to the novel from which the fable is taken. Here we read that Juliet's female attendant was banished for concealing the marriage ; Romeo's servant set at liberty because he had only acted in obedience to his master's orders ; the apothecary taken, tortured, condemned, and hanged ; while friar Laurence was permitted to retire to a hermitage in the neighbourhood of Verona, where he ended his life in penitence and peace. STEEVENS.

⁷ *For never was a story of more woe,*

Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.] These lines seem to have been formed on the concluding couplet of the poem of *Romeus and Juliet* :

“ —among the monuments that in Verona been,
“ There is no monument more worthy of the sight,
“ Than is the tomb of Juliet, and Romeus her knight.”

MALONE.

Shakspeare has not effected the alteration of this play by introducing any new incidents, but merely by adding to the length of the scenes.

The piece appears to have been always a very popular one. Marston, in his satires, 1598, says :

“ Luscus, what's play'd to-day ?—faith, now I know
“ I set thy lips abroad, from whence doth flow
“ Nought but pure Juliet and Romeo.” STEEVENS.

This

This play is one of the most pleasing of our author's performances. The scenes are busy and various, the incidents numerous and important, the catastrophe irresistibly affecting, and the process of the action carried on with such probability, at least with such congruity to popular opinions, as tragedy requires.

Here is one of the few attempts of Shakspeare to exhibit the conversation of gentlemen, to represent the airy sprightliness of juvenile elegance. Mr. Dryden mentions a tradition, which might easily reach his time, of a declaration made by Shakspeare, that *he was obliged to kill Mercutio in the third act, lest he should have been killed by him.* Yet he thinks him *no such formidable person, but that he might have lived through the play, and died in his bed,* without danger to the poet. Dryden well knew, had he been in quest of truth, in a pointed sentence, that more regard is commonly had to the words than the thought, and that it is very seldom to be rigorously understood. Mercutio's wit, gaiety, and courage, will always procure him friends that wish him a longer life; but his death is not precipitated, he has lived out the time allotted him in the construction of the play; nor do I doubt the ability of Shakspeare to have continued his existence, though some of his sallies are perhaps out of the reach of Dryden; whose genius was not very fertile of merriment, nor ductile to humour, but acute, argumentative, comprehensive, and sublime.

The nurse is one of the characters in which the author delighted: he has with a great subtilty of distinction, drawn her at once loquacious and secret, obsequious and insolent, trusty and dishonest.

His comick scenes are happily wrought, but his pathetick strains are always polluted with some unexpected depravations. His persons, however distressed, *have a conceit left them in their misery, a miserable conceit.*

JOHNSON.

H A M L E T.

* * * The original story on which this play is built, may be found in Saxo Grammaticus the Danish historian. From thence Belleforest adopted it in his collection of novels, in seven volumes, which he began in 1564, and continued to publish through succeeding years. From this work, *The Hystorie of Hamblett*, quarto, bl. l. was translated. I have hitherto met with no earlier edition of the play than one in the year 1604, though it must have been performed before that time, as I have seen a copy of Speght's edition of Chaucer, which formerly belonged to Dr. Gabriel Harvey, (the antagonist of Nash) who in his own hand-writing, has set down Hamlet, as a performance with which he was well acquainted, in the year 1598. His words are these: "The younger sort take much delight in Shakspeare's Venus and Adonis; but his Lucrece, and his tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke, have it in them to please the wiser sort, 1598."

In the books of the Stationers' Company, this play was entered by James Roberts, July 26, 1602, under the title of "A booke called *The Revenge of Hamlett, Prince of Denmarke*, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain his servantes."

In *Eastward Hoe*, by George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston, 1605, is a fling at the Hero of this tragedy. A footman named Hamlet enters, and a tankard-bearer asks him—"Sfoote, Hamlet, are you mad?"

The frequent allusions of contemporary authors to this play sufficiently show its popularity. Thus, in Decker's *Bel-man's Nightwalkes*, 4:0. 1612, we have—"But if any mad Hamlet, hearing this, smell villainie, and rush in by violence to see what the tawny diuels [gypsies] are dooing, then they excuse the fact" &c. Again, in an old collection of Satirical Poems, called *The Night Raven*, is this couplet:

"I will not cry *Hamlet Revenge* my greeves,
"But I will call Hangman, Revenge on Thieves."

STEEVENS.

Surely no satire was intended in *Eastward Hoe*, which was acted at Shakspeare's own playhouse, (Blackfriars,) by the children of the revels, in 1605. MALONE.

The following particulars relative to the date of this piece, are borrowed from Dr. Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare*, p. 85, 86, second edition:

"Greene, in the Epistle prefixed to his *Arcadia*, hath a lash at some 'vaine glorious tragedians,' and very plainly at Shakspeare in particular.—'I leave all these to the mercy of their mother-tongue, that feed on nought but the crums that fall from the translator's trencher.—That could scarcely latinize their neck verse if they should have neede, yet *English Seneca* read by candlelight yeelds many good sentences—hee will afford you whole *Hamlets*, I should say, *bandfuls* of tragicall speeches.'—I cannot determine exactly when this *Epistle* was first published; but, I fancy, it will carry the original *Hamlet* somewhat further back than we have hitherto done: and it may be observed, that the oldest copy now extant, is said to be 'enlarged to almost as much againe as it was.' Gabriel Harvey printed at the end of the year 1592, 'Foure Letters and certaine Sonnetts, especially touching

touching *Robert Greene*: in one of which his *Arcadia* is mentioned. Now *Nash*'s Epistle must have been previous to these, as *Gabriel* is quoted in it with applause; and the *Four Letters* were the beginning of a quarrel. *Nash* replied in 'Strange News of the intercepting certaine Letters, and a Convoy of Verses, as they were going *privilie* to victual the *Low Countries*, 1593.' *Harvey* rejoined the same year in 'Pierce's Supererogation, or a new Praise of the old Affe.' And *Nash* again, in 'Have with you to *Saffron Walden*, or *Gabriell Harvey*'s Hunt is up;' containing a full answer to the eldest sonne of the halter-maker, 1596.'—*Nash* died before 1606, as appears from an old comedy called *The Return from Parnassus*.

STEEVENS.

A play on the subject of *Hamlet* had been exhibited on the stage before the year 1589, of which Thomas Kyd was, I believe, the author. On that play, and on the bl. letter *Historie of Hamblet*, our poet, I conjecture, constructed the tragedy before us. The earliest edition of the prose-narrative which I have seen, was printed in 1608, but it undoubtedly was a republication.

Shakspeare's *Hamlet* was written, if my conjecture be well founded, in 1596. See *An Attempt to ascertain the Order of his Plays*.

MALONE.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Claudius, *King of Denmark.*
Hamlet,* *son to the former, and nephew to the present, king.*
Polonius, *Lord Chamberlain.*
Horatio, *friend to Hamlet.*
Laertes, *son to Polonius,*
Voltimand, }
Cornelius, } *Courtiers.*
Rosencrantz, }
Guildenstern, }
Osrick, *a courtier.*
Another courtier.
A priest.
Marcellus, }
Bernardo, } *Officers.*
Francisco, *a soldier.*
Reynaldo, *servant to Polonius.*
A Captain. An Ambassador.
Ghost of Hamlet's father.
Fortinbras, *Prince of Norway.*

Gertrude, *Queen of Denmark, and mother of Hamlet.*
Ophelia, *daughter of Polonius.*

*Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Players, Gravediggers;
Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.*

SCENE, Elfinore.

* i. e. *Amletb.* The *b* transferred from the end to the beginning of the name. STEEVENS.

H A M L E T,

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Elfinore. *A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO *on his post.* Enter to him BERNARDO.

Ber. Who's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me:² stand and unfold Yourself.

Ber. Long live the King!³

Fran. Bernardo?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now⁴ struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

Fran. For this relief, much thanks: 'tis bitter cold, And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch,⁵ bid them make haste.

Enter

² i. e. *me* who am already on the watch, and have a right to demand the watch-word. STEEVENS.

³ This sentence appears to have been the watch-word. STEEVENS.

⁴ I strongly suspect that the true reading is—*new* struck, &c.

STEEVENS.

⁵ *Rivals* for partners. WARBURTON.

By *rivals* the speaker certainly means *partners* (according to Dr. Warburton's explanation,) or those whom he expected to watch with him. Marcellus had watched with him before; whether as a centinel, a volunteer, or from mere curiosity, we do not learn: but, which ever it was, it seems evident that his station was on the same spot with Bernardo, and that there is no other centinel by them relieved. Possibly Marcellus

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Fran. I think, I hear them.—Stand, ho! Who is there?

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier:

Who hath reliev'd you?

Fran. Bernardo hath my place.

Give you good night. [Exit FRANCISCO.]

Mar. Holla! Bernardo!

Ber. Say,

What, is Horatio there?

Hor.

was an officer, whose business it was to visit each watch, and perhaps to continue with it some time. Horatio, as it appears, watches out of curiosity. But in act II. sc. i. to Hamlet's question,—“Hold you the watch to-night?” Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo, all answer,—“We do, my honour'd lord.” The folio indeed, reads—*both*, which one may with great propriety refer to Marcellus and Bernardo. If we did not find the latter gentleman in such good company, we might have taken him to have been like Francisco whom he relieves, an honest but common soldier. The strange indiscriminate use of Italian and Roman names in this and other plays, makes it obvious that the author was very little conversant in even the rudiments of either language. RITSON.

Rival is constantly used by Shakspeare for a partner or associate. In Bullokar's *English Expositor*, 8vo. 1616, it is defined, “*One that sueth for the same thing with another;*” and hence Shakspeare, with his usual licence, always uses it in the sense of *one engaged in the same employments or office with another*. *Competitor*, which is explained by Bullokar by the very same words which he has employed in the definition of *rival*, is in like manner (as Mr. M. Mason has observed,) always used by Shakspeare for *associate*.

Mr. Warner would read and point thus:

If you do meet Horatio, and Marcellus

The rival of my watch,—

because Horatio is a gentleman of no profession, and because, as he conceived, there was but one person on each watch. But there is no need of change. Horatio is certainly not an officer, but Hamlet's fellow-student at Wittenberg: but as he accompanied Marcellus and Bernardo on the watch from a motive of curiosity, our poet considers him very properly as an *associate* with them. Horatio himself says to Hamlet in a subsequent scene,

“ ——— This to me

“ In dreadful secrecy impart they did,

“ And I with them the third night kept the watch.” MALONE.

Hor. A piece of him.⁶

Ber. Welcome, Horatio: welcome, good Marcellus.

Hor. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

Ber. I have seen nothing.

Mar. Horatio says, 'tis but our fantasy;
And will not let belief take hold of him,
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:
Therefore I have entreated him along,
With us to watch the minutes of this night;⁷
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes,⁸ and speak to it.

Hor. Tush! tush! 'twill not appear.

Ber. Sit down awhile;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we two nights have seen.⁹

Hor. Well, fit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Ber. Last night of all,
When yon same star, that's westward from the pole,
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus, and myself,
The bell then beating one,—

Mar. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!

Enter Ghost.

Ber. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

Mar.

⁶ But why a *piece*? He says this as he gives his hand. Which direction should be marked. *WARBURTON.*

A piece of him, is, I believe, no more than a cant expression. It is used, however, on a serious occasion in *Pericles*. *STEEVENS.*

⁷ This seems to have been an expression common in Shakspeare's time. *STEEVENS.*

⁸ Add a new testimony to that of our eyes. *JOHNSON.*

He may make good the testimony of our eyes; be assured by his own experience of the truth of that which *we* have related, in consequence of having been eye-witnesses to it. To approve in Shakspeare's age, signified to make good, or establish. *MALONE.*

⁹ This line is by Sir T. Hanmer given to Marcellus, but without necessity. *JOHNSON.*

Mar. Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.²

Ber. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

Hor. Most like:—it harrows me³ with fear, and wonder.

Ber. It would be spoke to.

Mar. Speak to it, Horatio.

Hor. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak.

Mar. It is offended.

Ber. See! it stalks away.

Hor. Stay; speak; speak I charge thee, speak.

[Exit Ghost.

Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio? you tremble, and look pale:
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you of it?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe,
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the king?

Hor. As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on,
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,⁴
He smote the fledg'd Polack⁶ on the ice.

'Tis

² It has always been a vulgar notion that spirits and supernatural beings can only be spoken to with propriety or effect by persons of learning.

Thus the honest butler in Mr. Addison's *Drummer*, recommends the steward to speak *Latin* to the ghost in that play. REED.

³ To *barrow* is to conquer, to subdue. The word is of Saxon origin.

STEEVENS.

⁴ This is one of the affected words introduced by Lyly. STEEVENS.

⁵ A *sled*, or *sledge*, is a carriage without wheels, made use of in the cold countries. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Pole-ax* in the common editions. He speaks of a prince of Poland whom he slew in battle. He uses the word *Polack* again, Act II. sc. iv.

POPE.

Polack was, in that age, the term for an inhabitant of Poland: *Polaque*, French. JOHNSON.

Tis strange.

Mar. Thus, twice before, and jump⁷ at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work,⁸ I know not;
But, in the gross and scope⁹ of mine opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land;
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights,² whose fore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week:

What

All the old copies have *Polax*. Mr. Pope and the subsequent editors read—*Polack*; but the corrupted word shews, I think, that Shakspeare wrote—*Polacks*. MALONE.

With *Polack* for *Polander*, the transcriber, or printer, might have no acquaintance; he therefore substituted *pole-ax* as the only word of like sound that was familiar to his ear. Unluckily, however, it happened that the *singular* of the latter has the same sound as the *plural* of the former. Hence it has been supposed that Shakspeare meant to write *Polacks*. We cannot well suppose that in a *parley* the King belaboured many, as it is not likely that provocation was given by more than one, or that on such an occasion he would have condescended to strike a meaner person than a prince. STEEVENS.

⁷ So, the 4to. 1604. The folio—*just*. STEEVENS.

The correction was probably made by the author. JOHNSON.

In the folio we sometimes find a familiar word substituted for one more ancient. MALONE.

Jump and *just* were synonymous in the time of Shakspeare. Ben Jonson speaks of verses made on *jump names*, i. e. names that suit exactly. STEEVENS.

⁸ What particular train of thinking to follow. STEEVENS.

⁹ General thoughts, and tendency at large. JOHNSON.

² Judge Barrington, *Observations on the more ancient Statutes*, p. 300, having observed that Shakspeare gives English manners to every country where his scene lies, infers from this passage, that in the time even of Queen Elizabeth, shipwrights as well as seamen were forced to serve.

WHALLEY.

Impress signifies only the act of retaining shipwrights by giving them what was called *prest* money (from *pret*, Fr.) for holding themselves in readiness to be employed. STEEVENS.

What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day;
Who is't, that can inform me?

Hor. That can I;
At least the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
Dar'd to the combat; in which, our valiant Hamlet
(For so this side of our known world esteem'd him,)
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact,
Well ratified by law, and heraldry,³
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands,
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror:
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same co-mart,⁴
And carriage of the article design'd,

His

³ Mr. Upton says, that Shakspeare sometimes expresses one thing by two substantives, and that *law and heraldry* means, by the *herald law*.

STEEVENS.

Puttenham, in his *Art of Poesie*, speaks of the *Figure of Twynnes*,
“*horses and barbes, for barbed horses, venim & dartes, for venomous dartes,*”
&c. FARMER.

That is, according to the forms of *law heraldry*. When the right of property was to be determined by combat, the rules of *heraldry* were to be attended to, as well as those of *law*. M. MASON.

i. e. to be well ratified by the rules of law, and the forms prescribed *jure feciali*; such as proclamation, &c. MALONE.

⁴ *Comart* signifies a bargain, and *carrying of the article*, the covenant entered into to confirm that bargain. Hence we see the common reading [*covenant*] makes a tautology. WARBURTON.

Co-mart is, I suppose, a *joint bargain*, a word perhaps of our poet's coinage. A *mart* signifying a great fair or market, he would not have scrupled to have written—to *mart*, in the sense of *to make a bargain*. In the preceding speech we find *mart* used for bargain or purchase. MALONE.

Carriage, is *import*: *design'd*, is *formed, drawn up between them*.

JOHNSON

Cawdrey in his *Alphabetical Table*, 1604, defines the verb *design* thus:
“To marke out or appoint for any purpose.” See also Minshew's Dict.
1617. “To *designe* or shew by a token.” *Designed* is yet used in this sense in Scotland. MALONE.

His fell to Hamlet : Now, fir, young Fortinbras,
 Of unimproved mettle hot and full,⁵
 Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,
 Shark'd up a list of landless resolute,⁶
 For food and diet, to some enterprize
 'That hath a stomach in't :⁷ which is no other
 (As it doth well appear unto our state,)
 But to recover of us, by strong hand,
 And terms compulsatory, those foresaid-lands
 So by his father lost : And this, I take it,
 Is the main motive of our preparations ;
 The source of this our watch ; and the chief head
 Of this post-haste and romage⁸ in the land.

[*Ber.* I think,⁹ it be no other, but even so ;

Well

⁵ *Full of unimproved mettle*, is full of spirit not regulated or guided by knowledge or experience. JOHNSON.

⁶ I believe, to *shark up* means to pick up without distinction, as the *shark-fish* collects his prey. The quartos read *lawless*, instead of *landless*.
 STEEVENS.

⁷ *Stomach*, in the time of our author, was used for *constancy*, *resolution*.

JOHNSON.

⁸ Tumultuous hurry. JOHNSON.

⁹ These, and all other lines confined within crotchets throughout this play, are omitted in the folio edition of 1623. The omissions leave the play sometimes better and sometimes worse, and seem made only for the sake of abbreviation. JOHNSON.

It may be worth while to observe, that the title-pages of the first quartos in 1604 and 1605, declare this play to be *enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect copy*.

Perhaps therefore many of its absurdities as well as beauties arose from the quantity added after it was first written. Our poet might have been more attentive to the amplification than the coherence of his fable.

The degree of credit due to the title-page, that styles the MS. from which the quartos, 1604 and 1605 were printed, the *true and perfect copy*, may also be disputable. I cannot help supposing this publication to contain all Shakspeare rejected, as well as all he supplied. By restorations like the former, contending book-sellers or theatres might have gained some temporary advantage over each other, which at this distance of time is not to be understood. The patience of our ancestors exceeded our own, could it have outlasted the tragedy of *Hamlet* as it is now printed ; for it must have occupied almost five hours in representation. If, however, it was too much dilated on the ancient stage, it is as injudiciously contracted on the modern one. STEEVENS.

Well may it sort,³ that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king
That was, and is, the question of these wars.⁴

Hor. A mote it is,⁵ to trouble the mind's eye,
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,⁶
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

.....
As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun;⁷ and the moist star,
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
And even⁸ the like precursor of fierce events,⁹—
As harbingers preceding still the fates,
And prologue to the omen coming on,²—

Have

³ The cause and effect are proportionate and suitable. JOHNSON.

⁴ The theme or subject. MALONE.

⁵ The first quarto reads—*a motb.* STEEVENS.

A motb was only the old spelling of *mote*. MALONE.

⁶ *Palmy* for *victorious*. POPE.

⁷ Mr. Rowe altered these lines, because they have insufficient connection with the preceding one, thus:

*Stars shone with trains of fire, dews of blood fell,
Disasters veil'd the sun,——.*

This passage is not in the folio. By the quartos therefore our imperfect text is supplied: for an intermediate verse being evidently lost, it were idle to attempt a union that never was intended. I have therefore signified the supposed deficiency by a vacant space.

When Shakspere had told us that the *graves stood tenantless, &c.* which are wonders confined to the earth, he naturally proceeded to say (in the line now lost) that *yet other prodigies appeared in the sky*; and these phænomena he exemplified by adding,—*As* [i. e. as for instance] *Stars with trains of fire, &c.* STEEVENS.

⁸ Not only such prodigies have been seen in Rome, but the elements have shown our countrymen like forerunners and foretokens of violent events. JOHNSON.

⁹ *Fierce*, for *terrible*. WARBURTON.

I rather believe that *fierce* signifies *conspicuous glaring*. STEEVENS.

² But *prologue* and *omen* are merely synonymous here. The poet means, that these strange *phænomena* are prologues and forerunners of the events *presag'd*: and such sense the slight alteration, which I have ventured to make, by changing *omen* to *omen'd*, very aptly gives. THEOBALD.

Omen,

Have heaven and earth together démonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.—]

Re-enter Ghost.

But, soft; behold! lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it, though it blast me.—Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any found,³ or use of voice,
Speak to me:

If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,
Speak to me:

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!

Or, if thou hast uphoarded⁴ in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,

[*Cock crows.*

Speak of it:—stay, and speak.—Stop it, Marcellus.

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partizan?

Hor. Do, if it will not stand.⁵

Ber.

Omen, for fate. WARBURTON.

Hammer follows Theobald.

A distich from the life of Merlin, by Heywood, however, will show that there is no occasion for correction:

“*Merlin well vers'd in many a hidden spell,*

“*His countries omen did long since foretell.*” FARMER.

Omen, I believe, is danger. STEEVENS.

³ The speech of Horatio to the spectre is very elegant and noble, and congruous to the common traditions of the causes of apparitions.

JOHNSON.

⁴ So, in Decker's *Knight's Conjuring*, &c. “—If any of them had bound the spirit of gold by any charmes in caves, or in iron fetters under the ground, they should for their own soules quiet (which questionlesse else would whine up and down) if not for the good of their children, release it.” STEEVENS.

⁵ I am unwilling to suppose that Shakspeare could appropriate these absurd effusions to *Horatio*, who is a scholar, and has sufficiently proved his good understanding by the propriety of his addresses to the phantom. Such a man therefore must have known that

Ber. 'Tis here !

Hor. 'Tis here !

Mar. 'Tis gone !

[*Exit Ghost.*

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence ;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Ber. It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Hor. And then it started, like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day ; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,^s

The

“ As easy might he the intrenchant air
“ With his keen sword impress,”

as commit any act of violence on the royal shadow. The words—*Stop it, Marcellus,—and Do, if it will not stand*—better suit the next speaker, *Bernardo*, who, in the true spirit of an unlettered officer, *nihil non arroget armis*. Perhaps the first idea that occurs to a man of this description, is to strike at what offends him. Nicholas Poussin, in his celebrated picture of the Crucifixion, has introduced a similar occurrence. While lots are casting for the sacred vesture, the graves are giving up their dead. This prodigy is perceived by one of the soldiers, who instantly grasps his sword, as if preparing to defend himself, or resent such an invasion from the other world.

The two next speeches—*'Tis here !—'Tis here !* may be allotted to *Marcellus and Bernardo* ; and the third—*'Tis gone ! &c.* to *Horatio*, whose superiority of character indeed seems to demand it.—As the text now stands, *Marcellus* proposes to strike the Ghost with his partizan, and yet afterwards is made to descant on the indecorum and impotence of such an attempt.

The names of speakers have so often been confounded by the first publishers of our author, that I suggest this change with less hesitation than I should express concerning any conjecture that could operate to the disadvantage of his words or meaning.—Had the assignment of the old copies been such, would it have been thought liable to objection ?

STEEVENS.

^s According to the pneumatology of that time, every element was inhabited by its peculiar order of spirits, who had dispositions different, according to their various places of abode. The meaning therefore is, that all spirits extravagant, wandering out of their element, whether aerial spirits visiting earth, or earthly spirits ranging the air, return to their station

The extravagant⁶ and erring spirit hies
To his confine : and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock ;⁷
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long :
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad ;
The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,

No

station, to their proper limits in which they are *confined*. We might read :

“ ——— And at his warning
“ 'Th' extravagant and erring spirit hies
“ To his confine, whether in sea or air,
“ Or earth, or fire. And of,” &c.

But this change, though it would smoothe the construction, is not necessary, and, being unnecessary, should not be made against authority.

JOHNSON.

A Chorus in Andreini's drama, called *Adamo*, written in 1613, consists of spirits of fire, air, water, and hell, or subterraneous, being the exiled angels. “Choro di Spiriti ignei, aerei, acquatici, ed infernali,” &c. These are the demons to which Shakspeare alludes. These spirits were supposed to controul the elements in which they respectively resided ; and when formally invoked or commanded by a magician, to produce tempests, conflagrations, floods, and earthquakes. T. WARTON.

Bourne of Newcastle, in his *Antiquities of the common People*, informs us, “It is a received tradition among the vulgar, that at the time of cock-crowing, the midnight spirits forsake these lower regions, and, go to their proper places.—Hence it is, (says he) that in country places, where the way of life requires more early labour, they always go chearfully to work at that time ; whereas if they are called abroad sooner, they imagine every thing they see, a wandering ghost.” And he quotes on this occasion, as all his predecessors had done, the well-known lines from the first hymn of *Prudentius*. I know not whose translation he gives us, but there is an old one by Haywood. The *pious chansons*, the *hymns* and *carols*, which Shakspeare mentions presently, were usually copied from the elder Christian poets. FARMER.

⁶ i. e. got out of his bounds. WARBURTON.

⁷ This is a very ancient superstition. Philostratus giving an account of the apparition of Achilles' shade to Apollonius Tyaneus, says that it vanished with a little glimmer as soon as the cock crowed. Vit. Apol. iv. 16.

STEEVENS.

Faded has here its original sense ; it *vanished*. *Vado*, Lat.

MALONE.

No fairy takes,⁸ nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Hor. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill :
Break we our watch up ; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet ; for, upon my life,
This spirit dumb to us, will speak to him :
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty ?

Mar. Let's do't, I pray ; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most convenient. [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

The same. A Room of State in the same.

*Enter the King, Queen, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES,
VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.*

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green ; and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe ;
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere, with a defeated joy,—
With one auspicious, and one dropping eye ;⁹

With

⁸ No fairy *strikes* with lameness or diseases. This sense of *take* is frequent in this author. JOHNSON.

⁹ Perhaps, we have here only the ancient proverbial phrase—"To cry with one eye and laugh with the other," buckram'd by our author for the service of tragedy. See *Ray's Collection*, edit. 1768, p. 188.

STEEVENS.

Dropping in this line probably means *depressed* or cast downwards. It may, however, signify *weeping*. "*Dropping* of the eyes" was a technical expression in our author's time. MALONE.

With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole—,
Taken to wife : nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along :—For all, our thanks.

Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,—
Holding a weak supposal of our worth ;
Or thinking, by our late dear brother's death,
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleagu'd with this dream of his advantage,²
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bands of law,
To our most valiant brother.—So much for him.
Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting.
Thus much the business is : We have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
His further gait herein ;³ in that the levies,
The lifts, and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject :—and we here despatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway ;
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more⁴ than the scope
Of these dilated articles⁵ allow.
Farewell ; and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor.

² The meaning is,—He goes to war so indiscreetly, and unprepared, that he has no allies to support him but a *dream*, with which he is *colleagu'd* or confederated. WARBURTON.

This dream of his advantage (as Mr. M. Mason observes) means only “this imaginary advantage, which Fortinbras hoped to derive from the state of the kingdom.” STEEVENS.

³ *Gate* or *gait* is here used in the northern sense, for *proceeding, passage* ; from the A. S. verb *gae*. A *gate* for a path, passage, or street, is still current in the north. PERCY.

⁴ More is comprized in the general design of these articles, which you may explain in a more diffuse and dilated style. JOHNSON.

⁵ i. e. the articles when dilated. MUSGRAVE.

The poet should have written *allows*. Many writers fall into this error, when a plural noun immediately precedes the verb. MALONE.

Cor. Vol. In that, and all things, will we show our duty.

King. We doubt it nothing ; heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you ?

You told us of some suit ; What is't, Laertes ?

You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,

And lose your voice : What would'st thou beg, Laertes,

That shall not be my offer, not thy asking ?

The head is not more native to the heart,

The hand more instrumental to the mouth,

Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.⁶

What would'st thou have, Laertes ?

Laer.

My dread lord,

Your leave and favour to return to France ;

From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,

To show my duty in your coronation ;

Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,

My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,

And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave ? What says Polonius ?

Pol. He hath, my lord, [wrung from me my slow leave,
By labourfome petition ; and, at last,

Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent :]

I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes ; time be thine,

And thy best graces : spend it at thy will.⁷

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

Ham.

⁶ The sense seems to be this : The head is not formed to be more useful to the heart, the hand is not more at the service of the mouth, than my power is at your father's service. That is, he may command me to the utmost, he may do what he pleases with my kingly authority.

STEEVENS.

By *native to the heart* Dr. Johnson understands, “ natural and congenial to it, born with it, and co-operating with it.”

Formerly the heart was supposed the seat of wisdom ; and hence the poet speaks of the close connexion between the heart and head.

MALONE.

⁷ The sense is,—You have my leave to go, Laertes : make the fairest use you please of your time, and spend it at your will with the fairest graces you are master of.” THEOBALD.

I rather think this line is in want of emendation. I read :

——— time is thine,

And my best graces : spend it at thy will. JOHNSON.

Ham. A little more than kin, and less than kind.⁸ [*Aside.*

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Ham. Not so, my lord, I am too much i'the sun.⁹

Queen. Good Hamlet cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not, for ever, with thy veiled lids²

Seek for thy noble father in the dust:

Thou know'st, 'tis common; all, that live, must die,³

Passing

⁸ *Kind* is the Teutonick word for *child*. Hamlet therefore answers with propriety, to the titles of *cousin* and *son*, which the king had given him, that he was somewhat more than *cousin*, and less than *son*. JOHNSON.

In this line, with which Shakspeare introduces *Hamlet*, Dr. Johnson has perhaps pointed out a nicer distinction than it can justly boast of. To establish the sense contended for, it should have been proved that *kind* was ever used by an English writer for *child*. *A little more than kin*, is a little more than a common relation. The king was certainly something *less than kind*, by having betrayed the mother of Hamlet into an indecent and incestuous marriage, and obtained the crown by means which he suspects to be unjustifiable. In the fifth act, the prince accuses his uncle of having *popp'd in between the election and his popes*, which obviates Dr. Warburton's objection to the old reading, viz. that "the king had given no occasion for such a reflection."

As *kind*, however, signifies *nature*, Hamlet may mean that his relationship was become an *unnatural* one, as it was partly founded upon incest.

Dr. Farmer, however, observes that *kin* is still used for *cousin* in the midland counties. STEEVENS.

Hamlet does not, I think, mean to say, as Mr. Steevens supposes, that *his uncle* is a little more than kin, &c. The King had called the prince—"My cousin Hamlet, and my son."—His reply, therefore, is,—“I am a little more than thy kinsman, [for I am thy stepson;] and somewhat less than kind to thee, [for I hate thee, as being the person who has entered into an incestuous marriage with my mother]. Or, if we understand *kind* in its ancient sense, then the meaning will be,—*I am more than thy kinsman, for I am thy step-son*; being such, *I am less near to thee than thy natural offspring*, and therefore not entitled to the appellation of *son*, which you have now given me. MALONE.

⁹ He perhaps alludes to the proverb, “Out of heaven's blessing into the warm sun.” JOHNSON.

Meaning probably his being sent for from his studies to be exposed at his uncle's marriage as his *chiefest courtier*, &c. STEEVENS.

I question whether a quibble between *sun* and *son* be not here intended.

FARMER.

² With lowering eyes, cast down eyes. JOHNSON.

³ Perhaps the semicolon placed in this line, is improper. The sense, elliptically expressed, is,—Thou knowest it is common *that* all that live, must

Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen.

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

Ham. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not seems.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly: These, indeed, seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within, which passeth show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,
Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father:
But you must know, your father lost a father:
That father lost, lost his;⁴ and the survivor bound

In

must die.—The first *that* is omitted for the sake of metre, a practice often followed by Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

⁴ Mr. Pope judiciously corrected the faulty copies thus:

—your father lost a father;

That father, his;

On which the editor Mr. Theobald thus descants:—*This supposed refinement is from Mr. Pope, but all the editions else, that I have met with, old and modern, read,*

That father lost, lost his;—

The reduplication of which word here gives an energy and an elegance, WHICH IS MUCH EASIER TO BE CONCEIVED THAN EXPLAINED IN TERMS. I believe so: for when explained in terms it comes to this:—That father after he had lost himself, lost his father. But the reading is ex fide codicis, and that is enough. WARBURTON.

I do not admire the repetition of the word, but it has so much of our author's manner, that I find no temptation to recede from the old copies.

JOHNSON.

The meaning of the passage is no more than this,—*Your father lost a father, i. e. your grandfather, which lost grandfather, also lost his father.*

The metre, however, in my opinion, shows that Mr. Pope's correction should be adopted. The sense, though elliptically expressed, will still be the same. STEEVENS.

In filial obligation, for some term
 To do obsequious sorrow :⁵ But to persever
 In obstinate condolment,⁶ is a course
 Of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief :
 It shows a will most incorrect⁷ to heaven ;
 A heart unfortified, or mind impatient ;
 An understanding simple and unschool'd :
 For what, we know, must be, and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
 Take it to heart ? Fie ! 'tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
 To reason most absurd ;⁸ whose common theme
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cry'd,
 From the first corse, till he that died to-day,
This must be so. We pray you throw to earth
 This unprevailing woe ; and think of us
 As of a father : for let the world take note,
 You are the most immediate to our throne ;
 And, with no less nobility of love,⁹
 Than that which dearest father bears his son,
 Do I impart² toward you. For your intent

In

⁵ *Obsequious* is here from *obsequies*, or funeral ceremonies. JOHNSON.

⁶ *Condolment*, for sorrow. WARBURTON.

⁷ *Incorrect*, for untutor'd. WARBURTON.

Incorrect does not mean *untutored*, as Warburton explains it ; but *ill-regulated*, not sufficiently subdued. M. MALONE.

Not sufficiently regulated by a sense of duty and submission to the dispensations of providence. MALONE.

⁸ *Reason* is here used in its common sense, for the *faculty* by which we form conclusions from arguments. JOHNSON.

⁹ *Nobility* for magnitude. WARBURTON.

Nobility is rather *generosity*. JOHNSON.

By *nobility of love*, Mr. Heath understands, eminence and distinction of love. MALONE.

² *I believe impart* is, *impart myself*, communicate whatever I can bestow. JOHNSON.

The crown of Denmark was elective.

The king means that as Hamlet stands the fairest chance to be next elected, he will strive with as much love to ensure the crown to him, as a father would show in the continuance of heirdom to a son.

STEEVENS.

I agree

In going back to school in Wittenberg.³

It is most retrograde to our desire :

And, we beseech you, bend you to remain⁴

Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,

Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet ;
I pray thee, stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply ;
Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come ;

This

I agree with Mr. Steevens, that the crown of Denmark (as in most of the Gothick kingdoms) was elective, and not hereditary ; though it might be customary, in elections, to pay some attention to the royal blood, which by degrees produced hereditary succession. Why then do the rest of the commentators so often treat Claudius as an *usurper*, who had deprived young Hamlet of his *right by heirship* to his father's crown ? Hamlet calls him drunkard, murderer, and villain ; one who had carried the election by low and mean practices ; had

“ Popp'd in between the election and my hopes——”

“ Had from a shelf the precious diadem stole,

“ And put it in his pocket :”

but never hints at his being an *usurper*. His discontent arose from his uncle's being preferred before him, not from any legal right which he pretended to set up to the crown. Some regard was probably had to the recommendation of the preceding prince, in electing the successor. And therefore young Hamlet had “ the voice of the King himself for his succession in Denmark ;” and he at his own death prophesies that “ the election would light on Fortinbras, who had his dying voice,” conceiving that by the death of his uncle, he himself had been king for an instant, and had therefore a right to recommend. When, in the fourth act, the rabble wished to choose Laertes king, I understand that antiquity was forgot and custom violated, by electing a new king in the life-time of the old one, and perhaps also by the calling in a stranger to the royal blood.

BLACKSTONE.

³ In Shakspeare's time there was an university at Wittenberg, to which he has made Hamlet propose to return.

The university of Wittenberg, was not founded till 1502 consequently did not exist in the time to which this play is referred. MALONE.

Our author may have derived his knowledge of this famous university from *The Life of Iacke Wilton*, 1594, or *The History of Doctor Faustus*, of whom the *second report* (printed in the same year) is said to be “ written by an English gentleman, student in Wittenberg, an University of Germany in Saxony.” RITSON.

⁴ i. e. subdue your inclination to go from hence, and remain, &c.

STEEVENS.

This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart:⁵ in grace whereof,
No jocund health,⁶ that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell;
And the king's rouse⁷ the heaven shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt* King, Queen, Lords, &c. POLONIUS, and
LAERTES.

Ham. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!⁸
Or that the everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!⁹ O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature,
Possess it merely.² That it should come to this!
But two months dead!—nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr:³ so loving to my mother,

That

⁵ *Sits smiling to my heart:*] Surely it should be—

Sits smiling on my heart. RITSON.

To my heart, I believe signifies—*near to, close, next to, my heart.*

STEEVENS.

⁶ The king's intemperance is very strongly impressed; every thing that happens to him gives him occasion to drink. JOHNSON.

⁷ The king's draught of jollity. STEEVENS.

⁸ *Resolve* means the same as *dissolve*. STEEVENS.

⁹ The generality of the editions read—*cannon*, as if the poet's thought were,—Or, *that the Almighty had not planted his artillery, or arms of vengeance, against self-murder*. But the word which I restored (and which was espoused by the accurate Mr. Hughes, who gave an edition of this play) is the true reading, i. e. *that he had not restrained suicide by his express law and peremptory prohibition*. THEOBALD.

There are yet those who suppose the old reading to be the true one, as they say the word *fixed* seems to decide very strongly in its favour. I would advise such to recollect Virgil's expression:

“——— *fixit leges pretio, atque refixit.*” STEEVENS.

In Shakspeare's time *canon* (*norma*) was commonly spelt *cannon*.

MALONE.

² ——— *merely.*] is *entirely, absolutely*. STEEVENS.

³ This similitude at first sight seems to be a little far-fetched; but it has an exquisite beauty. By the *Satyr* is meant *Pan*, as by *Hyperion*,
Apollo,

That he might not beteem the winds of heaven ⁴
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!

Must

Apollo. Pan and *Apollo* were brothers, and the allusion is to the contention between those gods for the preference in musick.

WARBURTON.

All our English poets are guilty of the same false quantity, and call Hyperion Hyperion; at least the only instance I have met with to the contrary, is in the old play of *Fuimus Troes*, 1633:

“ ——— Blow gentle Africus,
 “ Play on our poops, when Hyperion son
 “ Shall couch in west.”

Shakspeare, I believe, has no allusion in the present instance, except to the beauty of *Apollo*, and its immediate opposite, the deformity of a Satyr. STEEVENS.

Hyperion or *Apollo* is represented in all the ancient statues, &c. as exquisitely beautiful, the satyrs hideously ugly.—Shakspeare may surely be pardoned for not attending to the quantity of Latin names, here and in *Cymbeline*; when we find Henry Parrot, the author of a collection of epigrams printed in 1613, to which a Latin preface is prefixed, writing thus:

“ *Posthúmus*, not the last of many more,
 “ Asks why I write in such an idle vaine,” &c.

Laquei ridiculosi, or Springes for Woodcocks, 16mo. sign. c. 3.

MALONE.

4 In former editions:

That he permitted not the winds of heaven—.

This is not a sophisticated reading, copied from the players in some of the modern editions, for want of understanding the poet, whose text is corrupt in the old impressions: all of which that I have had the fortune to see, concur in reading:

——so loving to my mother,
That he might not beteene the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly.

Beteene is a corruption without doubt, but not so inveterate a one, but that, by the change of a single letter, and the separation of two words mistakenly jumbled together, I am verily persuaded, I have retrieved the poet's reading—

That he might not let e'en the winds of heaven, &c.

THEOBALD.

The obsolete and corrupted verb—*beteene*, (in the first folio) which should be written (as in all the quartos) *beteeme*, was changed, as above, by Mr. Theobald; and with the aptitude of his conjecture succeeding criticks appear to have been satisfied.

Beteeme, however, occurs in the tenth book of Arthur Golding's version of *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, 4to. 1587; and, from the corresponding Latin, must necessarily signify, to vouchsafe, deign, permit, or suffer.

The

Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
 As if increase of appetite had grown
 By what it fed on: And yet, within a month,—
 Let me not think on't;—Frailty, thy name is woman!—
 A little month; or ere those shoes were old,
 With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
 Like Niobe, all tears;—why she, even she,—
 O heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
 Would have mourn'd longer,—marry'd with my uncle,
 My father's brother; but no more like my father,
 Than I to Hercules: Within a month;
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
 She marry'd:—O most wicked speed, to post
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
 It is not, nor it cannot come to, good;
 But break, my heart: for I must hold my tongue!

Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, and MARCELLUS.

Hor. Hail to your lordship!

Ham.

I am glad to see you well:

Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

Hor.

The existence and signification of the verb *beteem* being established, it follows, that the attention of Hamlet's father to his queen was exactly such as is described in the Enterlude of the *Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalaine*, &c. by Lewis Wager, 4to. 1567:

“But evermore they were unto me very tender,

“They would not suffer the wynde on me to blowe.”

I have therefore replaced the ancient reading, without the slightest hesitation, in the text.

This note was inserted by me in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, some years before Mr. Malone's edition of our author (in which the same justification of the old reading—*beteeme*, occurs,) had made its appearance.

STEEVENS.

This passage ought to be a perpetual memento to all future editors and commentators to proceed with the utmost caution in emendation, and never to discard a word from the text, merely because it is not the language of the present day.

Mr. Hughes or Mr. Rowe, supposing the text to be unintelligible, for *beteeme* boldly substituted *permitted*. Mr. Theobald, in order to favour his own emendation, stated untruly that *all* the old copies which he had seen, read *beteene*. His emendation appearing uncommonly happy, was adopted by all the subsequent editors. MALONE.

Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

Ham. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name⁵ with you.

And what make you⁶ from Wittenberg, Horatio?— Marcellus?

Mar. My good lord,——

Ham. I am very glad to see you; good even, sir.⁷—
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord.

Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so;
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know, you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elfinore?

We'll teach you to drink deep, ere you depart.

Hor. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think, it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hor. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats⁸
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
'Would I had met my dearest⁹ foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!—
My father,—Methinks, I see my father.

Hor. Where,
My lord?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him once, he was a goodly king.

Ham.

⁵ I'll be your servant, you shall be my friend. JOHNSON.

⁶ A familiar phrase for *what are you doing*. JOHNSON.

⁷ So the copies. Sir Thomas Hanmer and Dr. Warburton put it—
good morning. The alteration is of no importance, but all licence is
dangerous. There is no need of any change. Between the first and
eighth scene of this act it is apparent, that a natural day must
pass, and how much of it is already over, there is nothing that can
determine. The king has held a council. It may now as well be *evening*
as *morning*. JOHNSON.

⁸ It was anciently the general custom to give a cold entertainment to
mourners at a funeral. In distant counties this practice is continued
among the yeomanry. COLLINS.

⁹ *Dearest* for *direst*, most dreadful, most dangerous. JOHNSON.

Dearest is *most immediate, consequential, important*. MALONE.

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.²

Hor. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw ! who ?

Hor. My lord, the king your father.

Ham. The King my father !

Hor. Season³ your admiration for a while
With an attent ear ;⁴ till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Ham. For God's love, let me hear.

Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead waift⁵ and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point, exactly, cap-à-pé,
Appears before them, and, with solemn march,
Goes slow and stately by them : thrice he walk'd,
By their oppress'd and fear-surprized eyes,
Within his truncheon's length ; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,⁶
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did :
And I with them, the third night, kept the watch :
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,

The

² Mr. Holt proposes to read from an emendation of Sir Thomas Samwell, Bart. of Upton, near Northampton :

Eye shall not look upon his like again ;
and thinks it is more in the true spirit of Shakspeare than the other. So, in Stowe's *Chronicle*, p. 746 : " In the greatest pomp that ever eye behelde."

STEEVENS.

³ That is, *temper* it. JOHNSON.

⁴ Spenser, as well as our poet, uses *attent* for *attentive*. MALONE.

⁵ This strange phraseology seems to have been common in the time of Shakspeare. By *waift* is meant nothing more than *middle* ; and hence the epithet *dead* did not appear incongruous to our poet. MALONE.

Dead waste may be the true reading. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Fear* was the cause, the active cause that *distilled* them by that force of operation which we strictly call *act* in voluntary, and *power* in involuntary agents, but popularly call *act* in both. JOHNSON.

The apparition comes : I knew your father ;
These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this ?

Mar. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

Ham. Did you not speak to it ?

Hor. My lord, I did ;

But answer made it none : yet once, methought,
It lifted up its head, and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak :

But

⁷ Fielding, who was well acquainted with vulgar superstitions, in his *Tom Jones*, B. XI. ch. ii. observes that Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "like a ghost, only wanted to be spoke to," but then very readily answered. It seems from this passage, as well as from others in books too mean to be formally quoted, that spectres were supposed to maintain an obdurate silence, till interrogated by the people to whom they appeared.

The drift therefore of Hamlet's question is, whether his father's shade had been spoken to ; and not whether Horatio as a particular or privileged person, was the speaker to it. Horatio tells us he had seen the late king but once, and therefore cannot be imagined to have any particular interest with his apparition.

The vulgar notion that a ghost could only be spoken to with propriety and effect by a scholar, agrees very well with the character of Marcellus, a common officer ; but it would have disgraced the Prince of Denmark to have supposed the spectre would more readily comply with Horatio's solicitation, merely because it was that of a man who had been studying at a university.

We are at liberty to think the Ghost would have replied to Francisco, Bernardo, or Marcellus, had either of them ventured to question it. It was actually preparing to address Horatio, when the cock crew. The convenience of Shakspeare's play, however, required that the phantom should continue dumb, till Hamlet could be introduced to hear what was to remain concealed in his own breast, or to be communicated by him to some intelligent friend, like Horatio, in whom he could implicitly confide.

By what particular person therefore an apparition which exhibits itself only for the purpose of being urged to speak, was addressed, could be of no consequence.

Be it remembered likewise that the words are not as lately pronounced on the stage,—“Did not *you* speak to it ?”—but—“Did you not *speak* to it ?”—How awkward will the innovated sense appear, if attempted to be produced from the passage as it really stands in the true copies !

Did you not speak to it ?

The emphasis, therefore, should most certainly rest on—*speak*.

STEEVENS

But, even then, the morning cock crew loud;⁸
 And at the found it shrunk in haste away,
 And vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;
 And we did think it writ down in our duty,
 To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, firs, but this troubles me.
 Hold you the watch to-night?

All. We do, my lord.

Ham. Arm'd, say you?

All. Arm'd, my lord.

Ham. From top to toe?

All. My lord, from head to foot.

Ham. Then saw you not

His face.

Hor. O, yes, my lord: he wore his beaver up.⁹

Ham. What, look'd he frowningly?

Hor. A countenance more

In sorrow than in anger.

Ham. Pale, or red?

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham.

⁸ The moment of the evanescence of spirits was supposed to be limited to the crowing of the cock. This belief is mentioned so early as by Prudentius, *Cathem. Hymn.* l. v. 40. But some of his commentators prove it to be of much higher antiquity.

It is a most inimitable circumstance in Shakspeare, so to have managed this popular idea, as to make the Ghost, which has been so long obstinately silent, and of course must be dismissed by the morning, begin or rather prepare to speak, and to be interrupted, at the very critical time of the crowing of a cock.

Another poet, according to custom, would have suffered his ghost tamely to vanish, without contriving this start, which is like a start of guilt. To say nothing of the aggravation of the future suspense, occasioned by this preparation to speak and impart some mysterious secret. Less would have been expected, had nothing been promised. T. WARTON.

⁹ Though *beaver* properly signified that part of the helmet which was *let down*, to enable the wearer to drink, Shakspeare always uses the word as denoting that part of the helmet which, when raised up, exposed the face of the wearer: and such was the popular signification of the word in his time. MALONE.

Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would, I had been there.

Hor. It would have much amaz'd you.

Ham. Very like,

Very like: Stay'd it long?

Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Mar. Ber. Longer, longer.

Hor. Not when I saw it.

Ham. His beard was grizzl'd? no?

Hor. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A fable silver'd.

Ham. I will watch to-night;
Perhaps 'twill walk again.

Hor. I warrant, it will.

Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this fight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue;
I will requite your loves: So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honour.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you; Farewell.

[*Exeunt* HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.]

My father's spirit in arms!² all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: 'would, the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. [*Exit.*
SCENE

² From what went before, I once hinted to Mr. Garrick, that these words might be spoken in this manner:

My father's spirit! in arms! all is not well;— WHALLEY.

SCENE III.

*A Room in Polonius' House.**Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*

Laer. My necessaries are embark'd; farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit,
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;³
No more.

Oph. No more but so?

Laer. Think it no more:
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews,⁴ and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps, he loves you now;
And now no foil, nor cautel, doth besmirch
The virtue of his will: but,⁵ you must fear,

His

³ Thus the quarto: the folio has it:

—sweet, not lasting,
The suppliance of a minute.

It is plain that *perfume* is necessary to exemplify the idea of *sweet, not lasting*. With the word *suppliance* I am not satisfied, and yet dare hardly offer what I imagine to be right. I suspect that *soffiance*, or some such word, formed from the Italian, was then used for the act of fumigating with sweet scents. JOHNSON.

The perfume and suppliance of a minute; i. e. what is supplied to us for a minute; or, as Mr. M. Mason supposes, "an amusement to fill up a vacant moment, and render it agreeable." STEEVENS.

⁴ i. e. in sinews, muscular strength. STEEVENS.

⁵ From *cautela*, which signifies only a *prudent foresight* or caution; but, passing through French hands, it lost its innocence, and now signifies *fraud, deceit*. And so he uses the adjective in *Julius Cæsar*:

"Swear priests and cowards, and men *cautelous*." WARBURTON.

Cautel is subtlety or deceit. Minsheu in his Dictionary, 1617, defines it, "A crafty way to deceive."

His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own ;
 For he himself is subject to his birth :
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,
 Carve for himself ; for on his choice depends
 The safety and the health of the whole state ;
 And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
 Unto the voice and yielding of that body,
 Whereof he is the head : Then if he says, he loves you,
 It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
 As he in his particular act and place
 May give his saying deed ; which is no further,
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
 Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
 If with too credent ear you list his songs ;
 Or lose your heart ; or your chaste treasure open
 To his unmaster'd⁶ importunity.
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister ;
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,⁷
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.
 The chariest maid⁸ is prodigal enough,
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon :
 Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes :
 The canker galls the infants of the spring,
 Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd ;
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.
 Be wary then : best safety lies in fear ;
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep
 As watchman to my heart : But, good my brother,
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven ;
 Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,

Himself

Virtue seems here to comprise both *excellence* and *power*, and may be explained the *pure effect*. JOHNSON.

The *virtue of his will* means, his *virtuous intentions*. *Cautel* means *craft*.
 M. MASON.

⁶ —unmaster'd—] i. e. *licentious*. JOHNSON.

⁷ That is, do not advance so far as your affection would lead you.

JOHNSON.

⁸ *Chary* is cautious. STEEVENS.

Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own read.⁹

Laer. O, fear me not,
I stay too long;—But here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame;
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,²
And you are staid for: There,—my blessing with you;

[*Laying his hand on* LAERTES' head.

And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character.³ Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;⁴
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade.⁵ Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel: but, being in,
Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:
Take each man's censure,⁶ but reserve thy judgement.

Costly

⁹ That is, heeds not his own lessons. POPE.

So, Sternhold, *Psalms*. i:

“ ——— that hath not lent

“ To wicked *rede* his ear.” BLACKSTONE.

² This is a common sea phrase. STEEVENS.

³ i. e. write; strongly infix. MALONE.

⁴ The old copies read—with *boops* of steel. I have no doubt that this was a corruption in the original quarto of 1604, arising, like many others, from similitude of sounds. The emendation, which was made by Mr. Pope, and adopted by three subsequent editors, is strongly supported by the word *grapple*; which is an instrument with several *books* to lay hold of a ship in order to board it.

It may be also observed, that *books* are sometimes made of steel, but *boops* never. MALONE.

⁵ The literal sense is, *Do not make thy palm callous by shaking every man by the hand.* The figurative meaning may be, *Do not by promiscuous conversation make thy mind insensible to the difference of characters.* JOHNSON.

⁶ Censure is opinion. So in *King Henry VI.* P. II:

“ The king is old enough to give his censure.” STEEVENS.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
 But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy :
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man ;
 And they in France, of the best rank and station,
 Are most select and generous, chief in that.⁷
 Neither a borrower, nor a lender be :
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend ;
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.⁸
 This above all,—To thine ownself be true ;
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.
 Farewell ; my blessing season⁹ this in thee !

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Pol.

⁷ I think the whole design of the precept shows we should read :

Are most select, and generous chief, in that.

Chief may be an *adjective* used *adverbially*, a practice common to our author : *chiefly* generous. Yet it must be owned that the punctuation recommended is very stiff and harsh.

I would, however, more willingly read :

And they in France, of the best rank and station,

Select and generous, are most choice in that.

Let the reader, who can discover the slightest approach towards sense, harmony, or metre, in the original line,—

Are of a most select and generous chief, in that,—

adhere to the old copies. STEEVENS.

The genuine meaning of the passage requires us to point the line thus :

“ Are most select and generous, chief in that.”

i. e. the nobility of France are select and generous above all other nations, and chiefly in the point of apparel ; the richness and elegance of their dress. RITSON.

The substantive *chief*, which signifies in heraldry the upper part of the shield, appears to have been in common use in Shakspeare's time, and the meaning seems to be, *They in France approve themselves of a most select and generous escutcheon by their dress.* *Generous* is used with the signification of *generousus*. So, in *Othello* : ‘The generous islanders,’ &c.

Chief, however, may have been used as a substantive, for *note* or *estimation*, without any allusion to heraldry, though the word was perhaps originally *heraldick*.

Our poet from various passages in his works, appears to have been accurately acquainted with all the terms of heraldry. MALONE.

⁸ i. e. of thrift ; economical prudence. MALONE.

⁹ *Season*, for *infuse*. WARBURTON.

It is more than to *infuse*, it is to *infix* it in such a manner as that it never may wear out. JOHNSON.

Pol. The time invites you ; go, your servants tend.²

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia ; and remember well
What I have said to you.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.³

Laer. Farewell. [Exit LAERTES.]

Pol. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you ?

Oph. So please you, something touching the lord Hamlet.

Pol. Marry, well bethought :

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you ; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous :
If it be so, (as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution,) I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly,
As it behoves my daughter, and your honour :
What is between you ; give me up the truth.

Oph. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

Pol. Affection ? puh ! you speak like a green girl,
Unfifted⁴ in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them ?

Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Pol. Marry, I'll teach you : think yourself a baby ;
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly ;
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wringing it thus,) you'll tender me a fool.⁵

Oph.

² i. e. your servants are waiting for you. — JOHNSON.

³ The meaning is, that your counsels are as sure of remaining locked up in my memory, as if yourself carried the key of it. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Unfifted* for *untried*. *Untried* signifies either not *tempted*, or not *refined* ; *unfifted* signifies the latter only, though the sense requires the former. WARBURTON.

It means, I believe, one who has not sufficiently considered, or thoroughly sifted such matters. M. MASON.

I do not think that the sense requires us to understand *untempted*. “ *Unfifted in,*” &c. means, I think, one who has not nicely *canvassed* and examined the peril of her situation. MALONE.

⁵ The *parenthesis* is closed at the wrong place ; and we must have likewise a slight correction in the last verse. [*Wringing* it, &c.] Polonius is racking

Oph. My lord, he hath importun'd me with love,
In honourable fashion.

Pol. Ay, fashion⁶ you may call it; go to, go to.

Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks.⁷ I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,⁸
Giving more light than heat,—extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a making,—
You must not take for fire. From this time,
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments⁹ at a higher rate,
Than a command to parley. For lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, That he is young;
And with a larger tether² may he walk,

Than
and playing on the word *tender*, till he thinks proper to correct himself for
the licence; and then he would say—not farther to crack the wind of the
phrase, by *twisting* it and *contorting* it, as I have done. WARBURTON.

I believe, the word *wronging* has reference, not to the phrase, but to
Ophelia; if you go on *wronging* it thus, that is, if you continue to go on thus
wrong. This is a mode of speaking perhaps not very grammatical, but
very common: nor have the best writers refused it:

“To sinner it or saint it,”

is in Pope. And Rowe,

“—— Thus to coy it,

“With one who knows you too.”

The folio has it—*Roaming* it thus. That is, *letting yourself loose to such
improper liberty*. But *wronging* seems to be more proper. JOHNSON.

⁶ She uses *fashion* for *manner*, and he for a *transient practice*.

JOHNSON.

⁷ A proverbial saying, “Every woman has a *springe* to catch a woodcock.

STEEVENS.

⁸ Some epithet to *blazes* was probably omitted, by the carelessness of the
transcriber or compositor, in the first quarto, in consequence of which the
metre is defective. MALONE.

⁹ *Entreatments* here mean *company*, *conversation*, from the French *entrétien*,

JOHNSON.

Entreatments, I rather think, means the objects of *entreaty*; the favours
for which lovers sue. MALONE.

² A string to tie horses. POPE.

Tether is that string by which an animal, set to graze in grounds unin-
closed, is confined within the proper limits. JOHNSON.

Tether is a string by which any animal is fastened, whether for the
sake of feeding or the air. STEEVENS.

Than may be given you: In few, Ophelia,
 Do not believe his vows: for they are brokers³
 Not of that die which their investments show,
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,⁴
 The better to beguile. This is for all,—
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
 Have you so slander any moment's leisure,⁵

As

³ A *broker* in old English meant a *bawd* or *pimp*. MALONE.

⁴ On which the editor, Mr. Theobald, remarks, *Though all the editors have swallowed this reading implicitly, it is certainly corrupt; and I have been surprised how men of genius and learning could let it pass without some suspicion. What idea can we frame to ourselves of a breathing bond, or of its being sanctified and pious, &c.* But he was too hasty in framing ideas before he understood those already framed by the poet, and expressed in very plain words. Do not believe (says Polonius to his daughter) Hamlet's amorous vows made to you; which pretend religion in them (*the better to beguile*) like those sanctified and pious vows [*or bonds*] made to heaven. And why should not this pass without suspicion? WARBURTON.

Theobald for *bonds* substitutes *bawds*. JOHNSON.

Notwithstanding Warburton's elaborate explanation of this passage, I have not the least doubt but Theobald is right, and that we ought to read *bawds* instead of *bonds*. Indeed the present reading is little better than nonsense.

Polonius had called Hamlet's vows, *brokers*, but two lines before, a synonymous word to *bawds*, and the very title that Shakspeare gives to Pandarus, in his *Troilus and Cressida*. The words *implorators of unholy suits*, are an exact description of a *bawd*; and all such of them as are crafty in their trade, put on the appearance of sanctity, and are not of that die which their investments shew." M. MASON.

The old reading is undoubtedly the true one. Do not, says Polonius, believe his vows, for they are merely uttered for the purpose of persuading you to yield to a criminal passion, though they appear only the genuine effusion of a pure and lawful affection, and assume the semblance of those sacred engagements entered into at the altar of wedlock. The *bonds* here in our poet's thoughts were *bonds of love*.

Dr. Warburton certainly misunderstood this passage, and when triumphantly asks "why may not this pass without suspicion?" if he means his own comment, the answer is, because it is not perfectly accurate.

MALONE.

⁵ Polonius says, *in plain terms*, that is, not in language less elevated or embellished than before, but *in terms that cannot be misunderstood*: *I would not have you so disgrace your most idle moments, as not to find better employment for them than lord Hamlet's conversation.* JOHNSON.

As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.

Oph. I shall obey, my lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

The Platform.

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air.⁶

Ham. What hour now?

Hor. I think, it lacks of twelve.

Mar. No, it is struck.

Hor. Indeed? I heard it not; it then draws near the season,
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within.*
What does this mean my lord?

Ham. The king doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,⁷
Keeps wassel, and the swaggering up-spring reels;⁸
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

Hor. Is it a custom?

Ham. Ay, marry, is't:
But to my mind,—though I am native here,
And to the manner born,—it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach, than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel, east and west,⁹
Makes us traduc'd, and tax'd of other nations:
They clepe us, drunkards², and with swinish phrase,

Soil

⁶ That is, a sharp air, *aigre*, Fr. MALONE.

⁷ A rouse is a large dose of liquor, a debauch. STEEVENS.

⁸ The blustering upstart. JOHNSON.

⁹ *This heavy-headed revel makes us traduced east and west, and taxed of other nations.* JOHNSON.

By *east and west*, as Mr. Edwards has observed, is meant, throughout the world; *from one end of it to the other.* MALONE.

² And well our Englishmen might; for in Q. Elizabeth's time there was a Dane in London, of whom the following mention is made in a collection of characters entitled *Looke to it, for Ile stab ye*, no date:

Soil our addition ; and, indeed it takes
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.³
 So, oft it chances in particular men,
 'That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As, in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin,)
 By the o'er-growth of some complexion,⁴
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason ;
 Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens
 The form of plaufive manners ;⁵—that these men,—
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect ;
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,⁶—
 Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo,)⁷

Shall

“ You that will drinke *Keynaldo* unto d^ath,

“ The *Dane* that would carowse out of his boote.”

Mr. M. Mason adds, that “ it appears from one of Howell's letters dated at Hamburgh in the year 1632, that the then King of Denmark had not degenerated from his jovial predecessor.—In his account of an entertainment given by his majesty to the Earl of Leicester, he tells us, that the king after beginning thirty-five toasts, was carried away in his chair, and that all the officers of the court were drunk.” STEEVENS.

See also the *Nugæ Antiquæ*, Vol. II. p. 133, for the scene of drunkenness introduced into the court of James I. by the King of Denmark, in 1606, REED.

³ The best and most valuable part of the praise that would be otherwise attributed to us. JOHNSON.

⁴ i. e. humour ; as sanguine, melancholy, phlegmatick, &c.

WARBURTON.

⁵ That intermingles too much with their manners ; infects and corrupts them. *Plaufive* in our poet's age signified gracious, pleasing, popular.

Plaufible, in which sense *plaufive* is here used, is defined by Cawdrey in his *Alphabetical Table*, &c. 1604, “ *Pleasant*, or received joyfully and willingly.” MALONE.

⁶ The word *star* in the text signifies a *scar* of that appearance. It is a term of *farriery* : the *white star* or mark so common on the forehead of a dark coloured horse, is usually produced by making a *scar* on the place.

RITSON.

Some accidental blemish, the consequence of *the overgrowth of some complexion* or humour allotted to us by fortune at our birth, or some vicious habit accidentally acquired afterwards.

Theobald, plaufibly enough, would read—fortune's *scar*. MALONE.

⁷ As large as can be accumulated upon man. JOHNSON.

Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault : The dram of base
Doth all the noble substance often dout,
To his own scandal.⁸

Enter

⁸ I once proposed to read—*Doth all the noble substance* (i. e. the sum of good qualities) *oft do out*. We should now say,—*To its own scandal*; but *his* and *its* are perpetually confounded in the old copies.

As I understand the passage, there is little difficulty in it. This is one of the phrases which at present are neither employed in writing, nor perhaps are reconcileable to propriety of language.

To do a thing out, is to *extinguish* it, or to *efface* or *obliterate* any thing painted or written.

In the first of these significations it is used by Drayton, in the 5th Canto of his *Baron's Wars* :

“ Was ta'en in battle, and his eyes *out-done*.

My conjecture—*do out*, instead of *doubt*, might have received support from the pronunciation of this verb in Warwickshire, where they always say—“ *dout* the candle,”—“ *dout* the fire;” i. e. put out or extinguish them. The forfex by which a candle is extinguished is also there called—*a douter*.

Dout, however, is a word formed by the coalescence of two others, (*do* and *out*) like *don* for *do on*, *doff* for *do off*, both of which are used by Shakespeare.

The word in question (and with the same blunder in spelling) has already occurred in the ancient copies of *King Henry V* :

“ ————make incision in their hides,

“ That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,

“ And *doubt* them with superfluous courage :”

i. e. *put* or *do* them out. I therefore now think we should read :

Doth all the noble substance often dout, &c.

for surely it is needless to say—

———*the noble substance of worth dout*,

because the idea of *worth* is comprehended in the epithet—*noble*.

N. B. The improvement which my former note on this passage has received, I owed, about four years ago, to the late Rev. Henry Homer, a native of Warwickshire. But as Mr. Malone appears to have been furnished with almost the same intelligence, I shall not suppress his mode of communicating it, as he may fairly plead priority in having laid it before the publick. This is the sole cause why our readers are here presented with two annotations, of almost similar tendency, on the same subject: for unwilling as I am to withhold justice from a dead friend, I should with equal reluctance defend a living critick of his due. STEEVENS.

The quarto, where alone this passage is found, exhibits it thus :

———*the dram of eale*

Doth all the noble substance of a doubt,
To his own scandal.

To

Enter Ghost.

Hor.

Look, my lord, it comes!

Ham.

To *dout*, as I have already observed in a note on *King Henry V.* signified in Shakspeare's time, and yet signifies in Devonshire and other western counties, to *do out*, to efface, to extinguish. Thus they say, "*dout* the candle,"—"dout the fire," &c. It is exactly formed in the same manner as to *don* (or *do on*), which occurs so often in the writings of our poet and his contemporaries.

I have no doubt that the corruption of the text arose in the following manner. *Dout*, which I have now printed in the text, having been written by the mistake of the transcriber, *doubt*, and the word *worth* having been inadvertently omitted, the line, in the copy that went to the press stood,

Doth all the noble substance of doubt,———.

The editor or printer of the quarto copy, finding the line too short, and thinking *doubt* must want an article, inserted it, without attending to the context; and instead of correcting the erroneous, and supplying the true word, printed—

Doth all the noble substance of a doubt, &c.

The very same error has happened in *King Henry V.*:

"That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,

"And *doubt* them with superfluous courage:

where *doubt* is again printed instead of *dout*.

That *worth* (which was supplied first by Mr. Theobald) was the word omitted originally in the hurry of transcription, may be fairly collected from a passage in *Cymbeline*, which fully justifies the correction made:

"——— Is she with Posthumus?

"From whose so many weights of *baseness* cannot

"A dram of *worth* be drawn."

This passage also adds support to the correction of the word *eal* in the first of these lines, which was likewise made by Mr. Theobald.—*Base* is used substantively for *baseness*: a practice not uncommon in Shakspeare. So, in *Measure for Measure*:

"Say what thou canst, my *false* outweighs your *true*."

Shakspeare, however, might have written—The dram of *ill*. This is nearer the corrupted word *eale*, but the passage in *Cymbeline* is in favour of the other emendation.

The meaning of the passage thus corrected is, the smallest particle of vice so blemishes the whole mass of virtue, as to erase from the minds of mankind the recollection of the numerous good qualities possessed by him who is thus blemished by a single stain, and taints his general character.

To his own scandal, means so as to reduce the whole mass of *worth* to its own vicious and upfrightly appearance; to translate his virtue to the likeness of vice.

His for *its* is so common in Shakspeare, that every play furnishes us with examples. MALONE.

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!⁹—
 Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
 Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
 Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,²
 That I will speak to thee; I'll call thee, Hamlet,
 King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me:
 Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell,
 Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
 Have burst their cerements!³ why the sepulchre,

Wherein

⁹ Hamlet's speech to the apparition of his father seems to consist of three parts. When first he sees the spectre, he fortifies himself with an invocation:

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

As the spectre approaches, he deliberates with himself, and determines, that whatever it be he will venture to address it:

*Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
 Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
 Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
 That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee, &c.*

This he says while his father is advancing; he then, as he had determined, speaks to him, and calls him—*Hamlet, King, Father, Royal Dane: O! answer me.* JOHNSON.

² By *questionable* is meant provoking question. HANMER.

Questionable, I believe, means only *propitious to conversation, easy and willing to be conversed with*. So, in *As you like it*: “An unquestionable spirit, which you have not.” *Unquestionable* in this last instance certainly signifies *unwilling to be talked with*. STEEVENS.

Questionable perhaps only means *capable of being conversed with*. To *question*, certainly in our author's time signified *to converse*. MALONE.

³ Hamlet, amazed at an apparition, which, though in all ages credited, has in all ages been considered as the most wonderful and most dreadful operation of supernatural agency, enquires of the spectre, in the most emphatick terms, why he breaks the order of nature, by returning from the dead; this he asks in a very confused circumlocution, confounding in his fright the soul and body. Why, says he, have *thy bones*, which with due ceremonies have been entombed *in death*, in the common state of departed mortals, *burst* the folds in which they were embalmed? Why has the tomb, in which we saw thee quietly laid, opened his mouth, that mouth which, by its weight and stability, seemed closed for ever? The whole sentence is this: *Why dost thou appear, whom we know to be dead?* JOHNSON.

By the expression *hearsed in death* is meant, shut up and secured with all

Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,
 Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
 To cast thee up again! What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel,⁴
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,⁵
 So horridly to shake our disposition,⁶
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
 Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
 As if it some impartment did desire
 To you alone.

Mar. Look, with what courteous action
 It waves you to a more removed ground:⁷
 But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Hor.

all those precautions which are usually practised in preparing dead bodies for sepulture, such as the winding-sheet, shroud, coffin, &c. perhaps embalming into the bargain. So that *death* is here used, by a metonymy of the antecedent for the consequents, for the rites of death, such as are generally esteemed due, and practised with regard to dead bodies. Consequently, I understand by *cerements*, the waxed winding-sheet or winding-sheets, in which the corpse was enclosed and sown up, in order to preserve it the longer from external impressions, from the humidity of the sepulchre, as embalming was intended to preserve it from internal corruption. *HEATH.*

By *bearfed in death*, the poet seems to mean, *reposed and confined in the place of the dead.* *MALONE.*

⁴ It is probable that Shakspeare introduced his ghost in armour, that it might appear more solemn by such a discrimination from the other characters; though it was really the custom of the Danish kings to be buried in that manner. Vide *Olaus Wormius*, cap. vii. “*Struem regi nec vestibus, nec odoribus cumulant, sua cuique arma, quorundam igni et equus adjicitur.*” *STEEVENS.*

⁵ The expression is fine, as intimating we were only kept (as, formerly, fools in a great family,) to make sport for nature, who lay hid only to mock and laugh at us, for our vain searches into her mysteries.

WARBURTON.

Making us, who are the sport of nature, whose mysterious operations are beyond the reaches of our souls, &c. *MALONE.*

⁶ *Disposition for frame.* *WARBURTON.*

⁷ ——— a more removed ground:] i. e. remote. *STEEVENS.*

Hor. Do not, my lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;⁸
And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again;—I'll follow it.

Hor. What, if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er his base⁹ into the sea?
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,²
And draw you into madness? think of it:
The very place puts toys of desperation,³
Without more motive, into every brain,
That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
And hears it roar beneath.

Ham. It waves me still:—
Go on, I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my lord.

Ham. Hold off your hands.

Hor. Be rul'd, you shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body

As

⁸ — *pin's fee*;] The value of a pin. JOHNSON.

⁹ That *hangs o'er* his base, like what is called a *beetle-brow*. This verb is, I believe, of our author's coinage. MALONE.

² i. e. your ruling power of reason. When poets wish to invest any quality or virtue with uncommon splendor, they do it by some allusion to regal eminence. Thus, among the excellencies of Banquo's character, our author distinguishes "his *royalty* of nature," i. e. his natural superiority over others, his independent dignity of mind. I have selected this instance to explain the former, because I am told that "*royalty* of nature" has been idly supposed to bear some allusion to Banquo's distant prospect of the crown.

To *deprive* your sovereignty of reason, therefore, does not signify to deprive your princely mind of rational powers, but, to take away from you the command of reason, by which man is governed.

Dr. Warburton would read *deprave*; but several proofs are given in a note to *King Lear*, of Shakspeare's use of the word *deprive*, which is the true reading. STEEVENS.

I believe, *deprive* in this place signifies simply to take away.

JOHNSON.

³ Toys, for whims. WARBURTON.

As hardy as the Némean lion's nerve.— [Ghost beckons.
Still am I call'd :—unhand me, gentlemen ;—

[Breaking from them.

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me :⁴—
I say, away :—Go on,—I'll follow thee.

[Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Mar. Let's follow ; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Hor. Have after :—To what issue will this come ?

Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Hor. Heaven will direct it.⁵

Mar. Nay, let's follow him.

[Exeunt.

SCENE V.

A more remote Part of the Platform.

Re-enter Ghost and Hamlet.

Ham. Whither wilt thou lead me ? speak, I'll go no
further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Ham. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

Ham. Alas, poor ghost !

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Ham. Speak, I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Ham. What?

Ghost.

⁴ To let among our old authors signifies to prevent, to hinder. It is still a word current in the law, and to be found in almost all leases.

STEEVENS.

⁵ Perhaps it may be more apposite to read "Heaven will detect it."

FARMER.

Marcellus answers Horatio's question, "To what issue will this come?" and Horatio also answers it himself with a pious resignation, "Heaven will direct it." BLACKSTONE.

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit;
 Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;
 And, for the day, confin'd to fast in fires,⁶
 Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
 Are burnt and purg'd away.⁷ But that I am forbid
 To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
 I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
 Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;
 Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;
 Thy knotted and combined locks to part,

And

⁶ Chaucer has a similar passage with regard to the punishments of hell, *Parson's Tale*, p. 193, Mr. Urry's edition: "And moreover the misere of hell, shall be in defaute of mete and drinke." SMITH.

Nash, in his *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil*, 1595, has the same idea: "Whether it be a place of horror, stench and darknes, where men see meat, but can get none, and are ever thirsty," &c. Before I had read the *Perfones Tale* of Chaucer, I supposed that he meant rather to drop a stroke of satire on sacerdotal luxury, than to give a serious account of the place of future torment. Chaucer, however, is as grave as Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

This passage requires no amendment. As spirits were supposed to feel the same desires and appetites that they had on earth, to *fast* might be considered as one of the punishments inflicted on the wicked.

M. MASON.

⁷ Gawin Douglas really changes the Platonic hell into the "punition of faulis in purgatory:" and it is observeable, that when the ghost informs Hamlet of his doom there,

"Till the foul crimes done in his days of nature

"Are burnt and purg'd away,—"

The expression is very similar to the Bishop's. I will give you his version as concisely as I can: "It is a nedeful thyng to suffer panis and torment;—Sum in the wyndis, sum under the watter, and in the fire uthir sum: thus the mony vices—

"Contrakkit in the corporis be done away

"And purgit."——— *Sixte Book of Eneados*, fol. p. 191.

FARMER.

Shakspeare talks more like a Papist, than a Platonist; but the language of Bishop Douglas is that of a good Protestant:

"Thus the mony vices

"Contrakkit in the corporis be done away

"And purgit."

These are the very words of our Liturgy, in the commendatory prayer for a sick person at the point of departure, in the office for the visitation of the sick;—"Whatsoever defilements it may have contracted—being purged and done away." WHALLEY.

And each particular hair to stand on end,
 Like quills upon the fretful porcupine :
 But this eternal blazon must not be
 To ears of flesh and blood :—Lift, lift, O lift!—
 If thou didst ever thy dear father love,—

Ham. O heaven!

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.⁸

Ham. Murder?

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is ;
 But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Ham. Haste me to know it ; that I, with wings as swift
 As meditation, or the thoughts of love,⁹
 May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt ;
 And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed
 That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,²

Would'st

⁸ As a proof that this play was written before 1597, of which the contrary has been asserted by Mr. Holt in Dr. Johnson's Appendix, I must borrow, as usual, from Dr. Farmer : " Shakspeare is said to have been no extraordinary actor ; and that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*. Yet this *chef d'oeuvre* did not please : I will give you an original stroke at it. Dr. Lodge published in the year 1596, a pamphlet called *Wit's Miserie, or the World's Madnesse, discovering the incarnate Devils of the Age*, quarto. One of these devils is, *Hate-virtue, or sorrow for another man's good successe*, who, says the doctor, is a *foule lubber*, and looks as pale as the vizard of the Ghost, which cried so miserably at the theatre, *Hamlet revenge*." STEEVENS.

I suspect that this stroke was levelled not at Shakspeare, but at the performer of the Ghost in an older play on this subject, exhibited before 1589. See *An Attempt to ascertain the order of Shakspeare's Plays*.

MALONE.

⁹ This similitude is extremely beautiful. The word *meditation* is consecrated, by the *mysticks*, to signify that stretch and flight of mind which aspires to the enjoyment of the supreme good. So that Hamlet, considering with what to compare the swiftness of his revenge, chooses two of the most rapid things in nature, the ardency of divine and human passion, in an *enthusiast* and a *lover*. WARBURTON.

The comment on the word *meditation* is so ingenious, that I hope it is just. JOHNSON.

² Shakspeare, apparently through ignorance, makes Roman Catholics of these Pagan Danes ; and here gives a description of purgatory ; but yet mixes it with the Pagan fable of Lethe's wharf. Whether he did it to insinuate to the zealous Protestants of his time, that the Pagan
 and

Would'st thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear
 'Tis given out, that, sleeping in my orchard,
 A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
 Is by a forged process of my death
 Rankly abus'd: but know, thou noble youth,
 The serpent, that did sting thy father's life,
 Now wears his crown.

Ham. O, my prophetick soul! my uncle!

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
 With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
 (O wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power
 So to seduce!) won to his shameful lust
 The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:
 O, Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
 From me, whose love was of that dignity,
 That it went hand in hand even with the vow
 I made to her in marriage; and to decline
 Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
 To those of mine!

But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
 Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven;
 So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
 Will fate itself in a celestial bed,
 And prey on garbage.
 But, soft! methinks, I scent the morning air;
 Brief let me be:—Sleeping within mine orchard,³
 My custom always of the afternoon,
 Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
 With juice of curfed hebenon in a vial,⁴

And

and Popish purgatory stood both upon the same footing of credibility, or whether it was by the same kind of licentious inadvertence that Michael Angelo brought Charon's bark into his picture of the Last Judgement, is not easy to decide. WARBURTON.

³ Orchard for garden. STEEVENS.

⁴ The word here used was more probably designed by a *metatbesis*, either of the poet or transcriber, for *hebenon*, that is, *benbane*; of which the most common kind (*hyoscyamus niger*) is certainly *narcotick*, and perhaps, if taken in a considerable quantity, might prove poisonous. Galen calls it cold in the third degree; by which in this, as well as *opium*, he seems not to mean an actual coldness, but the power it has of
 benumbing

And in the porches of mine ears did pour
 The leperous distilment;⁵ whose effect
 Hold such an emnity with blood of man,
 That, swift as quicksilver, it courses through
 The natural gates and alleys of the body;
 And, with a sudden vigour, it doth posset
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
 And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
 Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
 All my smooth body.
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once despatch'd:⁶
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,⁷
 Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd:⁸

No

benumbing the faculties. Dioscorides ascribes to it the property of producing madness. These qualities have been confirmed by several cases related in modern observations. In Wepfer we have a good account of the various effects of this root upon most of the members of a convent in Germany, who eat of it for supper by mistake, mixed with succory;—heat in the throat, giddiness, dimness of sight, and delirium. *Cicut. Aquatic. c. xviii.* GREY.

⁵ So, in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, Vol. II. p. 142: “—— which being once possessed, never leaveth the patient till it hath enfeebled his state, like the qualitie of *poison distilling* through the veins even to the heart.” MALONE.

Surely, the leperous *distilment* signifies the water *distilled* from henbane, that subsequently occasioned leprosy. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Despatch'd*, for *bereft*. WARBURTON.

⁷ The very words of this part of the speech are taken (as I have been informed by a gentleman of undoubted veracity) from an old *Legend of Saints*, where a man, who was accidentally drowned, is introduced as making the same complaint. STEEVENS.

⁸ *Unhousel'd* is without having received the sacrament.

Disappointed, as Dr. Johnson observes, “is the same as *unappointed*, and may be properly explained *unprepared*. A man well furnished with things necessary for an enterprise, was said to be well *appointed*.”

This explanation of *disappointed* may be countenanced by a quotation of Mr. Upton's from *Measure for Measure*:

“Therefore your best *appointment* make with speed.”

Isabella, as Mr. Malone remarks, is the speaker, and her brother, who was condemned to die, is the person addressed.

Unanel'd is without extreme unction.

No reckoning made, but sent to my account
 With all my imperfections on my head:
 O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

If

I shall now subjoin as many notes as are necessary for the support of the first and third of these explanations. I administer the bark only, not supposing any reader will be found who is desirous to swallow the whole tree.

In the *Textus Roffensis* we meet with two of these words—"The monks offering themselves to perform all priestly functions of *boufeling*, and *aveyling*." *Aveyling* is misprinted for *aneyling*. STEEVENS.

See *Mort d'Arthur*, p. iii. c. 175: "So when he was *boufeled* and *aneled*, and had all that a Christian man ought to have," &c.

TYRWHITT.

The subsequent extract from a very scarce and curious copy of Fabian's Chronicle, printed by Pynson, 1516, seems to remove every possibility of doubt concerning the true signification of the words *unboufel'd* and *unarel'd*. The historian speaking of Pope Innocent's having laid the whole kingdom of England under an interdict, has these words: "Of the manner of this interdiction of this lande have I seen dyverse opynyons, as some ther be that saye that the lande was interdyted thorwly and the churchis and housys of relygyon closyd, that no where was used mase, nor dyvyne servyce, by whiche reason none of the VII sacramentis all this terme should be mynystred or occupied, nor chylde crystened, nor man confessed nor marryed; but it was not so strayght. For there were dyverse placys in Englonde, which were occupied with dyvyne servyce all that season by lycence purchasid than or before, also chyl dren were chrystenyd throughe all the lande and men *boufelyd* and *anelyd*. Fol. 14. Septima Pars Johannis."

The Anglo-Saxon noun-substantives *busel*, (the eucharist) and *ele* (oil) are plainly the roots of these last-quoted compound adjectives—. For the meaning of the affix *an* to the last, I quote Spelman's Gloss. in loco: "Quin et dictionibus (an) adjungitur, siquidem vel majoris notationis gratia, vel ad singulare aliquid, vel unicum demonstrandum." Hence *anelyd* should seem to signify *oiled* or *anointed* by way of eminence, i. e. having received extreme unction. For the confirmation of the sense given here, there is the strongest internal evidence in the passage. The historian is speaking of the VII sacraments, and he expressly names five of them, viz. baptism, marriage, auricular confession, the *eucharist*, and *extreme unction*.

The antiquary is desired to consult the edition of Fabian, printed by Pynson, 1516, because there are others, and I remember to have seen one in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, with a continuation to the end of Queen Mary, London, 1559, in which the language is much modernized. BRAND.

9 It was ingeniously hinted to me by a very learned lady, that this line

If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury² and damned incest.
 But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:³
 Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me. [Exit.

Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
 And shall I couple hell?—O fie!⁴—Hold, hold, my heart;
 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
 But bear me stiffly up!—Remember thee?
 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
 In this distracted globe.⁵ Remember thee?
 Yea, from the table of my memory
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
 That youth and observation copied there;
 And thy commandment all alone shall live
 Within the book and volume of my brain,
 Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven.
 O most pernicious woman!
 O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
 My tables,—meet it is, I set it down,⁶

That

line seems to belong to Hamlet, in whose mouth it is a proper and natural exclamation; and who, according to the practice of the stage, may be supposed to interrupt so long a speech. JOHNSON.

² *A couch for luxury*—] i. e. for *lewdness*. STEEVENS.

³ i. e. shining without heat. WARBURTON.

To pale is a verb used by Lady Elizabeth Carew, in her *Tragedy of Mariam*, 1613.

Uneffectual fire, I believe, rather means, fire that is no longer seen when the light of morning approaches. STEEVENS.

⁴ These words (which hurt the measure, and from that circumstance, and their almost ludicrous turn, may be suspected as an interpolation,) are found only in the two earliest quartos. STEEVENS.

⁵ i. e. in this head confused with thought. STEEVENS.

⁶ This is a ridicule on the practice of the time. Hall says, in his character

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least, I am sure, it may be so in Denmark: [*Writing.*
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;⁷
It is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me.*
I have sworn't.

Hor. [*Within.*] My lord, my lord,——

Mar. [*Within.*] Lord Hamlet,——

Hor. [*Within.*] Heaven secure him!

Ham. So be it!

Mar. [*Within.*] Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come⁸.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Mar. How is't, my noble lord?

Hor. What news, my lord?

Ham. O, wonderful!

Hor. Good my lord, tell it.

Ham. No;

You will reveal it.

Hor. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

Mar. Nor I, my lord.

Ham. How say you then; would heart of man once think
it?—

But you'll be secret,—

Hor. Mar. Ay, by heaven, my lord.

Ham.

Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the
character of the *Hypocrite* “He will ever sit where he may be seene best,
and in the midst of the sermon pulles, out his *tables* in haste, as if he feared
to loose that note,” &c. FARMER.

No ridicule on the practice of the time could with propriety be intro-
duced on this occasion. Hamlet avails himself of the same caution observed
by the doctor in the fifth act of *Macbeth*: “I will set down whatever
comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.”

“Dr. Farmer’s remark, however, as to the frequent use of table-books,
may be supported by many instances. STEEVENS.

Table-books in the time of our author appear to have been used by all
ranks of people. In the church they were filled with short notes of the
sermon, and at the theatre with the sparkling sentences of the play.

MALONE.

⁷ Hamlet alludes to the *watch-word* given every day in military service,
which at this time he says is *Adieu, adieu! remember me.* STEEVENS.

⁸ This is the call which falconers use to their hawks in the air, when
they would have him come down to them. HANMER.

Ham. There's ne'er a villain, dwelling in all Denmark,
But he's an arrant knave.

Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave,
To tell us this.

Ham. Why, right ; you are in the right ;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit, that we shake hands, and part :
You, as your business, and desire, shall point you ;—
For every man hath business, and desire,
Such as it is,—and, for my own poor part,
Look you, I will go pray.

Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

Ham. I am sorry they offend you, heartily ; yes,
'Faith, heartily.

Hor. There's no offence, my lord.

Ham. Yes, by faint Patrick,⁹ but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,—
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you :
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'er-master it as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Hor. What is't, my lord ?
We will.

Ham. Never make known what you have seen to-night.

Hor. Mar. My lord, we will not.

Ham. Nay, but swear't.

Hor. In faith,
My lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already.

Ham.

⁹ How the poet comes to make Hamlet swear by *St. Patrick*, I know not. However, at this time all the whole northern world had their learning from Ireland ; to which place it had retired, and there flourished under the auspices of this Saint. But it was, I suppose, only said at random ; for he makes Hamlet a student of Wittenberg. WARBURTON.

Dean Swift's "Verses on the sudden drying-up of *St. Patrick's Well*, 1726," contain many learned allusions to the early cultivation of literature in Ireland. NICHOLS.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. Ha, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there, true-penny? Come on,—you hear this fellow in the cellarage,—Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen, Swear by my sword.²

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear

Ham.

² Here the poet has preserved the manners of the ancient Danes, with whom it was *religion* to swear upon their swords. See *Bartholinus, De causis contempt. mort. apud Dan.* WARBURTON.

I was once inclinable to this opinion, which is likewise well defended by Mr. Upton; but Mr. Garrick produced me a passage, I think, in *Brantome*, from which it appeared, that it was common to swear upon the sword, that is, upon the cross which the old swords always had upon the hilt. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare, it is more than probable, knew nothing of the ancient Danes, or their manners. Every extract from Dr. Farmer's pamphlet must prove as instructive to the reader as the following:

“ In the *Passus Primus* of *Pierce Plowman*,

‘ David in his daies dubbed knightes,

‘ And did them *swere on her sword* to serve truth ever.”

“ And in *Hieronymo* the common butt of our author, and the wits of the time, says Lorenzo to Pedringano :

‘ Swear on this *cross*, that what thou say'st is true :

‘ But if I prove thee perjurd and unjust,

‘ This very *sword*, whereon thou took'st thine oath,

‘ Shall be a worker of thy tragedy.”

To the authorities produced by Dr. Farmer, the following amongst many others, may be added from *Holinshed*, p. 664: “ Warwick kissed the cross of K. Edward's sword, as it were a vow to his promise.”

Again in an ancient MS. of which some account is given in a note on the first scene of the first act of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the oath taken by a *master of defence* when his degree was conferred on him, is preserved, and runs as follows: “ First you shall swear (so help you God and halidome, and by all the christendome which God gave you at the fount-stone, and by the *cross* of this sword which doth represent unto you the *cross* which our Saviour suffered his most payneful deathe upon,) that you shal upholde, maynteyne, and kepe to your power all soch articles as shall be heare declared unto you, and receive in the presence of me your maister, and these the rest of the maisters my bretheren heare with me at this tyme.”

STEEVENS.

Spencer observes that the Irish in his time used commonly to swear by their sword. See his *View of the State of Ireland*, written in 1596. This custom, indeed, is of the highest antiquity; having prevailed as we learn from Lucian, among the Scythians. MALONE.

Ham. *Hic & ubique?* then we'll shift our ground:—
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword:
Swear by my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear by his sword.

Ham. Well said, old mole! canst work i'th' earth so fast?
A worthy pioneer!—Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.³
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come;—

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy!

How strange or odd so'er I bear myself,

As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet

To put an antick disposition on,—

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As, *Well, well, we know*;—or, *We could, an if we would*;—

or, *If we list to speak*;—or, *There be, an if they might*;—

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me:⁴—This do you swear,

So grace and mercy at your most need help you!

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham.

³ i. e. receive it to yourselves; take it under your own roof; as much as to say, *Keep it secret*. Alluding to the laws of hospitality. WARBURTON.

Warburton refines too much on this passage. Hamlet means merely to request that they would seem not to know it—to be unacquainted with it. M. MASON.

⁴ The construction is irregular and elliptical. Swear as before, says Hamlet, that you never *shall* by folded arms or shaking of your head intimate that a secret is lodged in your breasts; and by no ambiguous phrases denote that you know aught of me.

Shakspeare has in many other places begun to construct a sentence in one form, and ended it in another. So, in *All's well that ends well*: “I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the baring of my beard; and to say it was in stratagem.”

Having used the word *never* in the preceding part of the sentence, [that you *never* shall—] the poet considered the *negative* implied in what follows; and hence he wrote—“or—to note,” instead of *nor*. MALONE.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! ^s—So, gentlemen,
 With all my love I do commend me to you:
 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
 May do, to express his love and friending to you,
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
 The time is out of joint;—O cursed spite!
 That ever I was born to set it right!
 Nay, come, let's go together.

[*Exeunt.*]

^s The skill displayed in Shakspeare's management of his Ghost, is too considerable to be overlooked. He has rivetted our attention to it by a succession of forcible circumstances:—by the previous report of the terrified centinels,—by the solemnity of the hour at which the phantom walks,—by its martial stride and discriminating armour, visible only *per incertam lunam*, by the glimpses of the moon,—by its long taciturnity,—by its preparation to speak, when interrupted by the morning cock,—by its mysterious reserve throughout its first scene with Hamlet,—by his resolute departure with it, and the subsequent anxiety of his attendants.—by its conducting him to a solitary angle of the platform,—by its voice from beneath the earth,—and by its unexpected burst on us in the closet.

Hamlet's late interview with the spectre, must in particular be regarded as a stroke of dramattick artifice. The phantom might have told his story in the presence of the officers and Horatio, and yet have rendered itself as inaudible to them, as afterwards to the Queen. But suspense was our poet's object; and never was it more effectually created, than in the present instance. Six times has the royal semblance appeared, but till now has been withheld from speaking. For this event we have waited with impatient curiosity, unaccompanied by lassitude, or remitted attention.

The Ghost in this tragedy, is allowed to be the genuine product of Shakspeare's strong imagination. When he afterwards avails himself of traditional phantoms, as in *Julius Cæsar*, and *King Richard III.* they are but inefficacious pageants; nay, the apparition of Banquo is a mute exhibitor. Perhaps our poet despaired to equal the vigour of his early conceptions on the subject of preternatural beings, and therefore allotted them no further eminence in his dramas; or was unwilling to diminish the power of his principal shade, by an injudicious repetition of congenial images. STEEVENS.

A C T

ACT II. SCENE I.

*A Room in Polonius's House.**Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO.**Pol.* Give him this money, and these notes, Reynaldo.*Rey.* I will, my lord.*Pol.* You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo, Before you visit him, to make inquiry Of his behaviour.*Rey.* My lord, I did intend it.*Pol.* Marry, well said: very well said. Look you, sir, Inquire me first what Danfers⁶ are in Paris; And how, and who, what means, and where they keep, What company, at what expence; and finding, By this encompasment and drift of question, That they do know my son, come you more nearer Than your particular demands will touch it: Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him; As thus,—*I know his father, and his friends, And, in part, him*;—Do you mark this, Reynaldo?*Rey.* Ay, very well, my lord.*Pol.* *And, in part, him*;—but, you may say,—*not well*: But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild; Addicted so and so;—and there put on him What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank As may dishonour him; take heed of that; But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips, As are companions noted and most known To youth and liberty.*Rey.* As gaming, my lord.*Pol.*⁶ *Danske* (in Warner's *Albion's England*) is the ancient name of Denmark. STEEVENS.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! ⁵—So, gentlemen,
 With all my love I do commend me to you:
 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
 May do, to express his love and friending to you,
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
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Before you visit him, to make inquiry
Of his behaviour.*Rey.* My lord, I did intend it.*Pol.* Marry, well said: very well said. Look you, sir,
Inquire me first what Dan⁶kers are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expence; and finding,
By this encompassment and drift of question,
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it:
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;
As thus,—*I know his father, and his friends,*
And, in part, him;—Do you mark this, Reynaldo?*Rey.* Ay, very well, my lord.*Pol.* *And, in part, him;*—but, you may say,—*not well:*
But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild;
Addicted so and so;—and there put on him
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him; take heed of that;
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips,
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.*Rey.* As gaming, my lord.*Pol.*

⁶ *Danske* (in Warner's *Albion's England*) is the ancient name of Denmark. STEEVENS.

Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing,⁷ swearing, quarrelling, Drabbing :—You may go so far.

Rey. My lord, that would dishonour him.

Pol. 'Faith, no ; as you may season it in the charge. You must not put another scandal on him,⁸ That he is open to incontinency ; That's not my meaning :⁹ but breathe his faults so quaintly, That they may seem the taints of liberty : The flash and out-break of a fiery mind ; A savageness² in unreclaimed blood, Of general assault.³

Rey. But, my good lord,—

Pol. Wherefore should you do this ?

Rey. Ay, my lord, I would know that.

Pol. Marry, sir, here's my drift ; And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant : You laying these slight sullies on my son, As 'twere a thing a little foil'd i'the working, Mark you, Your party in converse, him you would sound, Having ever seen, in the prenominate crimes,⁴ The youth you breathe of, guilty, be assur'd, He closes with you in this consequence ; Good sir, or so ;⁵ or friend, or gentleman,—

According

⁷ I suppose, by *fencing* is meant a too diligent frequentation of the fencing-school, a resort of violent and lawless young men. JOHNSON.

Fencing, I suppose, means, piquing himself on his skill in the use of the sword, and quarrelling and brawling in consequence of that skill. MALONE.

⁸ Thus the old editions. Mr. Theobald reads,—*an utter*. JOHNSON.

i. e. a very different and more scandalous failing, namely, habitual incontinency. Mr. Theobald in his *Shakspeare Restored* proposed to read — *an utter scandal* on him ; but did not admit the emendation into his edition. MALONE.

⁹ That is not what I mean, when I permit you to accuse him of drabbing. M. MASON.

² *Savageness*, for *wildness*. WARBURTON.

³ i. e. such as youth in general is liable to. WARBURTON.

⁴ i. e. crimes already named. STEEVENS.

⁵ I suspect, (with Mr. Tyrwhitt,) that the poet wrote—*Good sir, or fir, or friend, &c.* In the last act of this play, *so* is used for *so forth* : “—fix French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, and *so*.” MALONE

According to the phrase, or the addition,
Of man, and country.

Rey. Very good, my lord.

Pol. And then, fir, does he this,—He does—
What was I about to say?—By the mass, I was about to say
something:—Where did I leave?

Rey. At closes in the consequence.—*Ay, marry:*
He closes with you thus:—*I know the gentleman;*
I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say,
There was he gaming; there o'ertook in his rouse;
There falling out at tennis: or, perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of sale,
(Videlicet, a brothel,) or so forth—
See you now;

Your bait of falsehood takes his carp of truth:
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlances, and with affays of bias,
By indirections find directions out:
So, by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son; You have me, have you not?

Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God be wi'you; fare you well.

Ry. Good my lord,—

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself.⁶

Rey. I shall, my lord.

Pol. And let him ply his musick.

Rey. Well, my lord.

[*Exit.*
Enter

⁶ Sir T. Hanmer reads, —*e'en* yourself, and is followed by Dr. Warburton; but perhaps *in* yourself means, *in your own person*, not by spies.

JOHNSON.

The meaning seems to be—The temptations you feel, suspect in him, and be watchful of them. So, in a subsequent scene:

“For by the image of my cause, I see

“The portraiture of his.”

Again, in *Timon*:

“I weigh my friend's affection with my own.” C.

Enter OPHELIA.

Pol. Farewell!—How now, Ophelia? what's the matter?

Oph. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

Pol. With what, in the name of heaven?

Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet,—with his doublet all unbrac'd;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved⁷ to his ancle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell,
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

Pol. Mad for thy love?

Oph. My lord, I do not know:
But, truly, I do fear it.

Pol. What said he?

Oph. He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so.
At last a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,—
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,⁸
And end his being: That done, he lets me go:
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o'doors he went without their helps,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

Pol. Come, go with me; I will go seek the king,
This is the very ecstasy of love;
Whose violent property fordoes itself,⁹
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under heaven,

That

⁷ *Down-gyved* means hanging down like the loose cincture which confines the fetters round the ancles. STEEVENS.

⁸ i. e. all his body. MALONE.

⁹ *To fordo* is to destroy. STEEVENS.

That does afflict our natures. I am sorry,—
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

Oph. No, my good lord; but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters, and deny'd
His access to me.

Pol. That hath made him mad.
I am sorry, that with better heed, and judgement,
I had not quoted him:² I fear'd, he did but trifle,
And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!
It seems, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion.³ Come, go we to the king:
This must be known; which, being kept close might
move

More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.⁴

Come.

[*Exeunt.*]

² To *quote* is, I believe, to *reckon*, to take an account of, to take the *qustient* or result of a computation. JOHNSON.

I find a passage in *The Isle of Gulls*, a comedy, by John Day, 1606, which proves Dr. Johnson's sense of the word to be not far from the true one:

“ ——— ’twill be a scene of mirth

“ For me to *quote* his passions, and his smiles.”

To *quote* on this occasion undoubtedly means to *observe*.

Again, in the *The Woman Hater*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, the intelligencer says,—“ I’ll *quote* him to a tittle,” i. e. I will mark or observe him.

To *quote* as Mr. M. Mason observes, is invariably used by Shakspeare in this sense. STEEVENS.

³ This is not the remark of a weak man. The vice of age is too much suspicion. Men long accustomed to the wiles of life *cast* commonly *beyond themselves*, let their cunning go farther than reason can attend it. This is always the fault of a little mind, made artful by long commerce with the world. JOHNSON.

⁴ This must be made known to the King, for (being kept secret) the hiding Hamlet's love might occasion more mischief to us from him and the queen, than the uttering or revealing of it will occasion hate and resentment from Hamlet. The poet's ill and obscure expression seems to have been caused by his affectation of concluding the scene with a couplet.

Sir T. Hanmer reads,

More grief to hide hate, than to utter love. JOHNSON.

R 5

SCENE

A Room in the Castle.

*Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,
and Attendants.*

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern!
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need, we have to use you, did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,
Since nor the exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was: What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from the understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of: I entreat you both,
That,—being of so young days brought up with him:
And, since, so neighbour'd to his youth and humour,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time: so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures; and to gather,
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;
And, sure I am, two men there are not living,
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry,⁵ and good will,
As to expend your time with us a while,
For the supply and profit of our hope,⁶
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,⁷

Put

⁵ *Gentry*, for *complaisance*. WARBURTON.

⁶ That the hope which your arrival has raised may be completed by the desired effect. JOHNSON.

⁷ I believe we should read—*o'er* us, instead of—*of* us. M. MASON.

Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

Guil. But we both obey;
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,⁸
'To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz:
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son.—Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guil. Heavens make our presence, and our practices,
Pleasant and helpful to him!

Queen. Ay, amen!

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and
some Attendants.*]

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. The embassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God, and to my gracious king:
And I do think, (or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy⁹ so sure
As it hath us'd to do) that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

Pol. Give first admittance to the embassadors:
My news shall be the fruit² to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in

[*Exit POLONIUS.*]

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found

The

⁸ *Bent*, for *endeavour*, *application*. WARBURTON.

The full bent, is the utmost extremity of exertion. The allusion is to a
bow bent as far as it will go. MALONE.

⁹ The trail is the course of an animal pursued by the scent. JOHNSON.

² The desert after the meat. JOHNSON.

The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt, it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

Re-enter POLONIUS, *with* VOLTIMAND *and* CORNELIUS.

King. Well, we shall sift him.—Welcome, my good friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

Volt. Most fair return of greetings, and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness: Whereat griev'd,—
That so his sickness, age, and impotence,
Was falsely borne in hand,³—sends out arrests
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine,
Makes vow before his uncle, never more
To give the assay⁴ of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee;⁵
And his commission, to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack:
With an entreaty, herein further shown, [Gives a paper.

That

³ i. e. deceived, imposed on. STEEVENS.

⁴ To *take the assay* was a technical expression, originally applied to those who tasted wine for princes and great men. MALONE.

⁵ This reading first obtained in the edition put out by the players. But all the old quartos (from 1605, downwards,) read *threescore*.

THEOBALD.

The metre is destroyed by the alteration; and threescore thousand crowns, in the days of Hamlet, was an enormous sum of money.

M. MASON.

Fee in this place signifies *reward, recompence*. The word is commonly used in Scotland, for *wages*, as we say *lawyer's fee, physician's fee*. STEEVENS.

Fee is defined by Minshew in his Dict. 1617, a reward. MALONE.

I have restored the reading of the folio. Mr. Ritson explains it, I think, rightly thus: the king gave his nephew a *feud* or *fee* (in land) of that yearly value. REED.

That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprize;
On such regards of safety, and allowance,
As therein are set down.

King. It likes us well;
And, at our more consider'd time, we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Mean time, we thank you for your well-took labour:
Go to your rest; at night we'll feast⁶ together:
Most welcome home!

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

Pol. This business is well ended.
My liege, and madam, to expostulate⁷

What

⁶ The king's intemperance is never suffered to be forgotten.

JOHNSON.

⁷ To *expostulate*, for to enquire or discuss.

The strokes of humour in this speech are admirable. Polonius's character is that of a weak, pedant, minister of state. His declamation is a fine satire on the impertinent oratory then in vogue, which placed reason in the formality of method, and wit in the gingle and play of words. With what art is he made to pride himself in his wit:

“*That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity:*

“*And pity 'tis, 'tis true: A foolish figure;*

“*But farewell it, —.*”

And how exquisitely does the poet ridicule the *reasoning in fashion*, where he makes Polonius remark on Hamlet's madness:

“*Though this be madness, yet there's method in't:*”

As if method, which the wits of that age thought the most essential quality of a good discourse, would make amends for the madness. It was *madness* indeed, yet Polonius could comfort himself with this reflection, that at least it was *method*. It is certain Shakspeare excels in nothing more than in the preservation of his characters; *To this life and variety of character* (says our great poet [Pope] in his admirable preface to Shakspeare) *we must add the wonderful preservation*. We have said what is the character of Polonius; and it is allowed on all hands to be drawn with wonderful life and spirit, yet the *unity* of it has been thought by some to be grossly violated in the excellent *precepts and instructions* which Shakspeare makes his statesman give his son and servant in the middle of the *first*, and beginning of the *second act*. But I will venture to say, these criticks have not entered into the poet's art and address in this particular. He had a mind to ornament his scenes with those fine lessons of social life; but his Polonius was too weak to be author of them, though he was pedant enough to have met with them in his reading, and sop enough to get them by heart, and retail them for his

What majesty should be, what duty is,

Why

own. And this the poet has finely shewn us was the case, where, in the middle of Polonius's instructions to his servant, he makes him, though without having received any interruption, forget his lesson, and say,

“ And then, fir, does he this;

“ He does——What was I about to say?

“ I was about to say something——where did I leave?”

The servant replies,

At, closes in the consequence. This sets Polonius right, and he goes on,

“ *At* closes in the consequence.

“ ——*Ay* marry,

“ *He closes thus* :——I know the gent'eman,” &c.

which shews the very words got by heart which he was repeating. Otherwise *closes in the consequence*, which conveys no particular idea of the subject he was upon, could never have made him recollect where he broke off. This is an extraordinary instance of the poet's art, and attention to the preservation of character. WARBURTON.

This account of the character of Polonius, though it sufficiently reconciles the seeming inconsistency of so much wisdom with so much folly, does not perhaps correspond exactly to the ideas of our author. The commentator makes the character of Polonius, a character only of manners, discriminated by properties superficial, accidental, and acquired. The poet intended a nobler delineation of a mixed character of manners and nature. Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident in his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his former train. This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius. JOHNSON.

Nothing can be more just, judicious, and masterly, than Johnson's delineation of the character of Polonius; and I cannot read it without heartily regretting that he did not exert his great abilities and discriminating powers, in delineating the strange, inconsistent, and indecisive character of Hamlet, to which I confess myself unequal. M. MASON.

Why day is day, night, night, and time is time,
 Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
 Therefore,—since brevity is the soul of wit,
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,—
 I will be brief: Your noble son is mad:
 Mad call I it: for, to define true madness,
 What is't, but to be nothing else but mad:
 But let that go.

Queen. More matter, with less art.

Pol. Madam, I swear, I use no art at all.
 That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity;
 And pity 'tis, 'tis true: a foolish figure;
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him then: and now remains,
 That we find out the cause of this effect;
 Or, rather say, the cause of this defect;
 For this effect, defective, comes by cause:
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
 Perpend.
 I have a daughter; have, while she is mine;
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
 Hath given me this: Now gather, and surmise.
 —To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified
*Ophelia,*⁸

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; *beautified* is a vile phrase;
 but you shall hear.—Thus:

In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.—

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.—

Doubt

⁸ Mr. Theobald for *beautified* substituted *beatified*. MALONE.

Dr. Warburton has followed Mr. Theobald; but I am in doubt whether *beautified*, though, as Polonius calls it, a *vile phrase*, be not the proper word. *Beautified* seems to be a *vile phrase*, for the ambiguity of its meaning. JOHNSON.

Heywood, in his *History of Edward VI* says “*Katherine Parre, queen dowager to king Henry VIII. was a woman beautified with many excellent virtues.*” FARMER.

By *beautified* Hamlet means *beautiful*. But Polonius, taking the word in the more strictly grammatical sense of *being made beautiful*, calls it a vile phrase, as implying that his daughter's beauty was the effect of art. M. MASON.

*Doubt thou, the stars are fire;
Doubt, that the sun doth move:
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt, I love.*

[Reads.]

*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not art
to reckon my groans: but that I love thee best, O most best,
believe it. Adieu.*

*Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this
machine is to him, Hamlet.⁹*

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me:
And more above,² hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
Receiv'd his love?

Pol. What do you think of me?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable.

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing,
(As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me,) what might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk, or table-book;
Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb;
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think?³ no, I went round⁴ to work,

And

⁹ These words will not be ill explained by the conclusion of one of the *Letters of the Paston Family*, Vol. II. p. 43: "— for your pleasure, *whyle my wyttys be my owne.*"

The phrase employed by Hamlet seems to have a French construction. *Pendant que cette machine est a lui.* To be one's own man is a vulgar expression, but means much the same as Virgil's

Dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus. STEEVENS.

² — more above,] is, moreover, besides. JOHNSON.

³ If either I had conveyed intelligence between them, and been the confident of their amours [*play'd the desk or table-book,*] or had connived at it, only observed them in secret, without acquainting my daughter with my discovery [*giving my heart a mute and dumb working;*] or lastly, had been negligent in observing the intrigue, and overlooked it [*looked upon this love with idle sight;*] what would you have thought of me? WARBURTON.

I doubt

And my young mistress thus did I bespeak ;
Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy sphere ;
This must not be : and then I precepts gave her,
 That she should lock herself from his resort,
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice ;⁵
 And he, repulsed, (a short tale to make,)
 Fell into a sadness ; then into a fast ;⁶
 Thence to a watch ; thence into a weakness ;
 Thence to a lightness ; and, by this declension,
 Into the madness wherein now he raves,
 And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think, 'tis this ?

Queen. It may be, very likely.

Pol. Hath there been such a time, (I'd fain know that)
 That I have positively said, '*Tis so*,
 When it prov'd otherwise ?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. Take this from this, if this be otherwise :

[*Pointing to his head and shoulder.*

If circumstances lead me, I will find
 Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
 Within the centre.

King. How may we try it further ?

Pol. You know, sometimes he walks four hours together,⁷
 Here

I doubt whether the first line is rightly explained. It may mean, if I had lock'd up this secret in my own breast, as closely as if it were confined in a desk or table-book. MALONE.

⁴ i. e. roundly, without reserve. STEEVENS.

⁵ She took the *fruits* of advice when she obeyed advice, the advice was then made *fruitful*. JOHNSON.

⁶ The ridicule of this character is here admirably sustained. He would not only be thought to have discovered this intrigue by his own sagacity, but to have remarked all the stages of Hamlet's disorder, from his sadness to his raving, as regularly as his physician could have done ; when all the while the madness was only feigned. The humour of this is exquisite from a man who tells us, with a confidence peculiar to small politicians, that he could find

“ Where truth was hid, though it were hid indeed

“ Within the centre.” WARBURTON.

⁷ Perhaps it would be better were we to read indefinitely,
 — for *hours together*. TYRWHITT.

Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does, indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him :
Be you and I behind an arras then ;
Mark the encounter : if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm, and carters.

King. We will try it.

Enter HAMLET, reading.

Queen. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes
reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away ;
I'll board him⁸ presently :—O, give me leave.—

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*]

How does my good lord Hamlet ?

Ham. Well, god-'a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my lord ?

Ham. Excellent well ; you are a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord ?

Ham. Ay, sir ; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be
one man pick'd out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being
a god, kissing carrion.—Have you a daughter ?⁹

Pol.

I formerly was inclined to adopt Mr. Tyrwhitt's proposed emendation ;
but have now no doubt that the text is right. The expression, *four*
hours together, two hours together, &c. appears to have been common.

MALONE.

⁸ i. e. accost, address him. REED.

⁹ [Old copies—a good kissing carrion,] The editors seeing Hamlet
counterfeit madness, thought they might safely put any nonsense into
his mouth. But this strange passage, when set right, will be seen to
contain as great and sublime a reflection as any the poet puts into his
hero's mouth throughout the whole play. We will first give the true
reading, which is this: *For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a*
god, kissing carrion,——. As to the sense we may observe, that the
illative

Pol. I have, my lord.

Ham.

illative particle [for] shows the speaker to be reasoning from something he had said before: what that was we learn in these words, *to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one picked out of ten thousand.* Having said this, the chain of ideas led him to reflect upon the argument which libertines bring against Providence from the circumstance of abounding evil. In the next speech therefore he endeavours to answer that objection, and vindicate Providence, even on a supposition of the fact, that almost all men were wicked. His argument in the two lines in question is to this purpose,—*But why need we wonder at this abounding of evil? For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, which though a god, yet shedding its heat and influence upon carrion*—Here he stops short, lest talking too consequentially the hearer should suspect his madness to be feigned; and so turns him off from the subject, by enquiring of his daughter. But the inference which he intended to make, was a very noble one, and to this purpose. If this, (says he) be the case, that the effect follows the thing operated upon [carrion] and not the thing operating [a god,] why need we wonder, that the supreme cause of all things diffusing its blessings on mankind, who is, as it were, a dead carrion, dead in original sin, man, instead of a proper return of duty, should breed only corruption and vices? This is the argument at length; and is as noble a one in behalf of Providence as could come from the schools of divinity. But this wonderful man had an art not only of acquainting the audience with what his actors say, but with what they think. The sentiment too is altogether in character, for Hamlet is perpetually moralizing, and his circumstances make this reflection very natural. The same thought, something diversified, as on a different occasion, he uses again in *Measure for Measure*, which will serve to confirm these observations:

“ The tempter or the tempted, who sins most ?

“ Not she ; nor doth she tempt ; but it is I

“ That lying by the violet in the sun,

“ Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,

“ Corrupt by virtuous season.”

And the same kind of *expression* is in *Cymbeline*:

“ Common-kissing Titan.” WARBURTON.

This is a noble emendation, which almost sets the critick on a level with the author. JOHNSON.

Dr. Warburton, in my apprehension, did not understand the passage. I have therefore omitted his laboured comment on it, in which he endeavours to prove that Shakspeare intended it as a vindication of the ways of Providence in permitting evil to abound in the world. He does not indeed pretend that this profound meaning can be drawn from what Hamlet says; but that this is what he was *thinking of*; for “ this wonderful man (Shakspeare) had an art not only of acquainting the audience with what his actors say, but with what they think !”

Hamlet's

Ham. Let her not walk i'the sun: conception is a blessing;² but as your daughter may conceive,—friend, look to't.

Pol. How say you by that? [*Aside.*] Still harping on my daughter:—yet he knew me not at first: he said I was a fish-

Hamlet's observation is, I think, simply this. He has just remarked that honesty is very rare in the world. To this Polonius assents. The prince then adds, that since there is so little virtue in the world, since corruption abounds every where, and maggots are *bred* by the sun, even in a dead dog, Polonius ought to take care to prevent his daughter from walking in the sun, lest she should prove “a breeder of sinners;” for though *conception* in general be a blessing, yet as Ophelia (whom Hamlet supposes to be as frail as the rest of the world) might chance to *conceive*, it might be a calamity. The maggots *breeding* in a dead dog, seem to have been mentioned merely to introduce the word *conception*; on which word, as Mr. Steevens has observed, Shakspeare has played in *King Lear*: and probably a similar quibble was intended here. The word, however, may have been used in its ordinary sense, for *pregnancy*, without any double meaning.

The slight connection between this and the preceding passage, and Hamlet's abrupt question,—*Have you a daughter?* were manifestly intended more strongly to impress Polonius with the belief of the prince's madness.

Perhaps this passage ought rather to be regulated thus:—“being a god-kissing carrion;” i. e. a carrion that kisses the sun. The participle *being* naturally refers to the last antecedent, *dog*. Had Shakspeare intended that it should be referred to *sun*, he would probably have written—“*be* being a god,” &c. We have many similar compound epithets in these plays.

However, the instance quoted from *Cymbeline* by Dr. Warburton, “—— common-kissing Titan,” seems in favour of the regulation that has been hitherto made; for here we find the poet considered the sun as kissing the carrion, not the carrion as kissing the sun.

In justice to Dr. Johnson, I should add, that the high elogium which he has pronounced on Dr. Warburton's emendation, was founded on the *comment* which accompanied it; of which, however, I think, his judgment must have condemned the reasoning, though his goodness and piety approved its moral tendency. MALONE.

As a doubt, at least, may be entertained on this subject, I have not ventured to expunge a note written by a great critick, and applauded by a greater. STEEVENS.

² Thus the quarto. The folio reads thus: “—— conception is a blessing; but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend look to't.” The meaning seems to be, *conception* (i. e. understanding) is a blessing; but as your daughter may *conceive* (i. e. be pregnant,) friend look to't, i. e. have a care of that. STEEVENS.

a fishmonger: He is far gone, far gone: and, truly, in my youth I suffer'd much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again.—What do you read, my lord?

Ham. Words, words, words!

Pol. What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who?

Pol. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

Ham. Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue³ says here, that old men have grey beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber, and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: All which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, shall be as old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

Pol. Though this be madness, yet there's method in it. [*Aside.*] Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave?

Pol. Indeed, that is out o'the air.—How pregnant some-times

³ By the *satirical rogue* he means Juvenal in his 10th Satire. Nothing could be finer imagined for Hamlet, in his circumstances, than the bringing him in reading a description of the evils of long life.

WARBURTON.

Had Shakspeare read *Juvenal* in the original, he had met with

“De temone Britanno, Excidet Arviragus”——

and

“—— Uxorem, *Posthume*, ducis?”

We should not then have had continually in *Cymbeline*, *Arviragus*, and *Posthumus*. Should it be said that the *quantity* in the former word might be forgotten, it is clear from the mistake in the latter, that Shakspeare could not possibly have read any one of the Roman poets.

There was a translation of the 10th Satire of *Juvenal* by Sir John Beaumont, the elder brother of the famous Francis: but I cannot tell whether it was printed in Shakspeare's time. In that age of quotation, every classick might be picked up by *piece-meal*.

I forgot to mention in its proper place, that another description of *Old Age* in *As you like it*, has been called a parody on a passage in a French poem of Garnier. It is trifling to say any thing about this, after the observation I made in *Macbeth*: but one may remark once for all, that Shakspeare wrote for the *people*; and could not have been so absurd as to bring forward any allusion, which had not been familiarized by some accident or other. FARMER.

times his replies are!⁴ a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be deliver'd of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ⁵ and GUILDENSTERN.

Pol. You go to seek the lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. God save you, sir!

[*To POLONIUS.*

[*Exit POLONIUS.*

Guil. My honour'd lord!—

Ros. My most dear lord!—

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not overhappy;

On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?

Guil. 'Faith, her privates we.

Ham. In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What news?

Ros. None, my lord; but that the world's grown honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near: But your news is not true. [Let me⁶ question more in particular: What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my lord!

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros.

⁴ *Pregnant* is ready, dexterous, apt. STEEVENS.

⁵ There was an ambassador of that name in England about the time when this play was written. STEEVENS.

⁶ All within the crotchets is wanting in the quartos. STEEVENS.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being one of the worst.

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space; were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition: for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.⁷

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Ham. Then are our beggars, bodies;⁸ and our monarchs, and outstretch'd heroes, the beggars' shadows: Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Ros. Guil. We'll wait upon you.

Ham. No such matter: I will not fort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.] But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear, a halfpenny.⁹ Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come; deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham.

⁷ Shakspeare has accidentally inverted an expression of Pindar, that the state of humanity is *οὐκ ἔστιν ὄνειαρ*, the dream of a shadow. JOHNSON.

⁸ Shakspeare seems here to design a ridicule of those declamations against wealth and greatness, that seem to make happiness consist in poverty. JOHNSON.

⁹ i. e. a half-penny too dear: they are worth nothing. The modern editors read—at a half-penny. MALONE.

Ham. Any thing—but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know, the good king and queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

Ros. What say you?

[*To* GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. Nay, then I have an eye of you;² [*Aside.*—if you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late,³ (but, wherefore, I know not,) lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a steril promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me, than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form, and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me,—nor woman neither; though, by your smiling, you seem to say so.

Ros. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said, *Man delights not me?*

Ros.

² An eye of you means, I have a glimpse of your meaning. STEEVENS.

³ This is an admirable description of a rooted melancholy sprung from thickens of blood; and artfully imagined to hide the true cause of his disorder from the penetration of these two friends, who were set over him as spies. WARBURTON.

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment⁴ the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way;⁵ and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

Ham. He that plays the king, shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil, and target: the lover shall not sigh gratis: the humorous man shall end his part in peace:⁶ the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o'the sere:⁷ and the lady shall say her mind freely,⁸ or the blank verse shall halt for't.—What players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it, they travel?⁹ their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Ros.

⁴ i. e. sparing, like the entertainments given in *Lent*. STEEVENS.

⁵ To cote is to overtake.

In the laws of coursing, says Mr. Tollet, “a cote is when a greyhound goes endways by the side of his fellow, and gives the hare a turn.” This quotation seems to point out the etymology of the verb to be from the French *coté*, the side. STEEVENS.

⁶ After these words the folio adds—*the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o' the sere*. WARBURTON.

⁷ i. e. those who are asthmatical, and to whom laughter is most uneasy. This is the case (as I am told) with those whose lungs are tickled by the *sere* or *serum*: but about these words I am neither very confident, nor very solicitous. STEEVENS.

These words are not in the quarto. I am by no means satisfied with the explanation given, though I have nothing satisfactory to propose. I believe Hamlet only means, that the clown shall make those laugh who have a disposition to laugh; who are pleased with their entertainment. That no asthmatick disease was in contemplation, may be inferred from both the words used, *tickled* and *lungs*, each of which seems to have a relation to laughter, and the latter to have been considered by Shakspeare, as (if I may so express myself,) its natural seat.

O'the sere, or *of the sere*, means, I think, *by the sere*; but the word *sere* I am unable to explain, and suspect it to be corrupt. Perhaps we should read—*the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o'the scene*, i. e. *by the scene*. MALONE.

⁸ The lady shall have no obstruction, unless from the lameness of the verse. JOHNSON.

I think, the meaning is,—The lady shall mar the measure of the verse, rather than not express herself freely or fully. HENDERSON.

⁹ To travel, in Shakspeare's time was the technical word, for which

Ros. I think, their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.²

Ham.

we have substituted to *stroll*. So, in the Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels to King Charles the First, a manuscript of which an account is given in Vol. II: "1622. Feb. 17, for a certificate for the Palsgrave's servants to *travel* into the country for six weeks, 10s." Again, in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, 1601: "If he pen for thee once, thou shalt not need to *travell*, with thy pumps full of gravell, any more, after a blinde jade and a hamper, and stalk upon boords and barrel-heads to an old crackt trumpet." These words are addressed to a player.

MALONE.

² I fancy this is transposed: Hamlet enquires not about an *inhibition*, but an *innovation*; the answer therefore probably was,—*I think, their innovation, that is, their new practice of strolling, comes by means of the late inhibition.* JOHNSON.

The drift of Hamlet's question appears to be this,—How chances it they travel?—i. e. *How happens it that they are become strollers?*—Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.—i. e. *to have remained in a settled theatre, was the more honourable as well as the more lucrative situation.* To this, Rosencrantz replies,—Their *inhibition* comes by means of the late *innovation*.—i. e. *their permission to act any longer at an established house is taken away, in consequence of the NEW CUSTOM of introducing personal abuse into their comedies.* Several companies of actors in the time of our author were silenced on account of this licentious practice.

Alteration therefore in the order of the words seem to be quite unnecessary. STEEVENS.

There will still, however, remain some difficulty. The statute 39 Eliz. ch. 4. which seems to be alluded to by the words—*their inhibition*, was not made to inhibit the players from acting any longer at an *established theatre*, but to prohibit them from *strolling*. "All fencers, (says the act,) bearwards, *common players of enterludes*, and minstrels, *wandering abroad*, (other than players of enterludes, belonging to any baron of this realm or any other honourable personage of greater degree, to be authorized to play under the hand and seal of arms of such baron or personage,) shall be taken, adjudged, and deemed, rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars, and shall sustain such pain and punishments as by this act is in that behalf appointed."

This statute, if alluded to, is repugnant to Dr. Johnson's transposition of the text, and to Mr. Steevens's explanation of it as it now stands. Yet Mr. Steevens's explanation may be right: Shakspeare might not have thought of the act of Elizabeth. He could not, however, mean to charge his friends the *old tragedians* with the *new custom* of introducing personal abuse; but must rather have meant, that the old tragedians were inhibited from performing in the city, and obliged to travel, on account of the misconduct of the younger company. See n. 6. MALONE.

By

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so follow'd?

Ros. No, indeed, they are not.

[*Ham.* How comes it?³ Do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: But there is, fir, an aiery of children,⁴ little eyases,⁵ that cry

By the late *innovation*, it is probable that Rosencrantz means the late change of government. M. MASON.

³ [*Ham.* *How comes it?* &c.] The lines enclosed in crotchets are in the folio of 1623, but not in any of the quartos. JOHNSON.

⁴ Relating to the play-houses then contending, the *Bankside*, the *Fortune*, &c. played by the children of his majesty's chapel. POPE.

It relates to the young singing men of the chapel royal, or St. Paul's, of the former of whom perhaps the earliest mention occurs in an anonymous puritanical pamphlet, 1569, entitled *The Children of the Chapel stript and whipt*: "Plaies will neuer be supprest, while her maiesties unfledged minions flaunt it in filkes and fattens. They had as well be at their popish seruice in the deuils garments," &c.

Concerning the performances and success of the latter in attracting the best company, I also find the following passage in *Jack Drum's Entertainment, or Pasquil and Katherine*, 1601:

"I saw the children of Powles last night:

"And troth they pleas'd me pretty, pretty well,

"The apes, in time, will do it handsomely.

"—— I like the audience that frequenteth there

"With much applause: a man shall not be choak'd

"With the stench of garlick, nor be pacted

"To the barmy jacket of a beer-brewer.

"—— 'Tis a good gentle audience," &c.

It is said in Richard Flecknoe's *Short Discourse of the English Stage*, 1664, that, "both the children of the chappel and St. Paul's, acted playes, the one in White-Friers, the other behinde the Convocation-house in Paul's; till people growing more precise, and playes more licentious, the theatre of Paul's was quite supprest, and that of the children of the chappel converted to the use of the children of the revels."

STEEVENS.

The suppression to which Flecknoe alludes took place in the year 1583-4; but afterwards both the children of the chapel and of the Revels played at our author's playhouse in Blackfriars, and elsewhere; and the choir-boys of St. Paul's at their own house. See *the Account of our old Theatres* in Vol. II. A certain number of the children of the Revels, I believe, belonged to each of the principal theatres.

Our author cannot be supposed to direct any satire at those young men who played occasionally at his own theatre. Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, and his *Poetaster*, were performed there by the children of Queen Elizabeth's chapel, in 1600 and 1601; and *Eastward Hoe* by the children

cry out on the top of question,⁶ and are most tyrannically clapp'd

of the revels, in 1604 or 1605. I have no doubt therefore that the dialogue before us was pointed at the choir-boys of St. Paul's, who in 1601 acted two of Marston's plays, *Antonio and Mellida*, and *Antonio's Revenge*. Many of Lyly's plays were represented by them about the same time; and in 1607 Chapman's *Buffy's Ambois* was performed by them with great applause. It was probably in this and some other noisy tragedies of the same kind, that they cry'd out on the top of question, and were most tyrannically clapp'd for't.

At a later period indeed, after our poet's death, the *Children of the Revels* had an established theatre of their own, and some dispute seems to have arisen between them and the King's company. They performed regularly in 1623, and for eight years afterwards, at the Red Bull in St. John's street; and in 1627, Shakspeare's company obtained an inhibition from the Master of the Revels to prevent their performing any of his plays at their house: as appears from the following entry in Sir Henry Herbert's Office-book, already mentioned: "From Mr. Heminge, in their company's name, to forbid the playinge of any of Shakspeare's playes to the Red-Bull company, this 11th of Aprill, 1627,—5 0 0." From other passages in the same book, it appears that the Children of the Revels composed the Red-Bull company.

We learn from Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, that the little *eyases* here mentioned were the persons who were guilty of the late innovation, or practice of introducing personal abuse on the stage, and perhaps for their particular fault the players in general suffered; and the older and more decent comedians, as well as the children, had on some recent occasion been inhibited from acting in London, and compelled to turn strollers. This supposition will make the words concerning which a difficulty has been stated, (see p. 387, n. 3.) perfectly clear. Heywood's *Apology for Actors* was published in 1612; the passage therefore which is found in the folio, and not in the quarto, was probably added not very long before that time.

"Now to speake (says Heywood,) of some abuse lately crept into the quality, as an inveighing against the state, the court, the law, the city, and their governments, with the particularizing of private mens humours, yet alive, noblemen and others, I know it distastes many: neither do I any way approve it, nor dare I by any means excuse it. The liberty which some arrogate to themselves, committing their bitterness and liberal invectives against all estates to the moutbes of children, supposing their juniority to be a privilege for any rayling, be it never so violent, I could advise all such to curbe, and limit this presumed liberty within the bands of discretion and government. But wise and judicial censurers before whom such complaints shall at any time hereafter come, will not, I hope, impute these abuses to any transgression in us, who have ever been carefull and provident to shun the like."

Prynne in his *Histriomastix*, speaking of the state of the stage, about the

clapp'd for't: these are now the fashion; and so berattle the common stages, (so they call them) that many, wearing rapiers, are afraid of goose quills, and dare scarce come thither.

Ham. What, are they children? Who maintains them? how are they escoted?⁷ Will they pursue the quality no longer

the year 1620, has this passage: "Not to particularise those late new scandalous invective playes, wherein sundry persons of place and eminence [Gundemore, the late lord admiral, lord treasurer, and others,] have been particularly personated, jeared, abused in a gross and scurrilous manner," &c.

Since this note was written, I have met with a passage in a letter from Mr. Samuel Calvert to Mr. Winwood, dated March 28, 1605, which might lead us to suppose that the words found only in the folio were added at that time:

"The plays do not forbear to present upon the stage the whole course of this present time, not sparing the king, state, or religion, in so great absurdity, and with such liberty, that any would be afraid to hear them." *Memorials*, Vol. II. p. 54. MALONE.

⁵ Little *eyases*; i. e. young nestlings, creatures just out of the egg.

THEOBALD.

The Book of Haukyng, &c. bl. 1. no date, seems to offer another etymology. "And so bycause the best knowledge is by the eye, they be called *eyessed*. Ye may also know an *eyesse* by the paleness of the feres of her legges, or the fere over the beake." STEEVENS.

From *ey*, Teut. ovum, q. d. qui recens ex ovo emergit. Skinner, *Etymol.* An *aiery* or *eyrie*, as it ought rather to be written, is derived from the same root, and signifies both a young brood of hawks, and the nest itself in which they are produced.

An *eyas* hawk is sometimes written a *nyas* hawk, perhaps from a corruption that has happened in many words in our language, from the latter *n* passing from the end of one word to the beginning of another. However, some etymologists think *nyas* a legitimate word. MALONE.

⁶ The meaning seems to be, they ask a common question in the highest note of the voice. JOHNSON.

I believe *question* in this place, as in many others, signifies *conversation*, *dialogue*. The meaning of the passage may therefore be—*Children that perpetually recite in the highest notes of voice that can be uttered.*

STEEVENS.

When we ask a *question*, we generally end the sentence with a high note. I believe, therefore, that what Rosencrantz means to say is, that these children declaim, through the whole of their parts, in the high note commonly used at the end of a question, and are applauded for it. M. MASON.

⁷ Paid. From the French *escot*, a shot or reckoning, JOHNSON.

longer than they can sing?⁷ will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players, (as it is most like, if their means are no better,) their writers do them wrong,⁸ to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Ros. Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin, to tarre them on to controversy;⁹ there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Ham. Is it possible?

Guil. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.²]

Ham. It is not very strange: for my uncle³ is king of Denmark; and those, that would make mouths at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats

⁷ Will they follow the *profession* of players no longer than they keep the voices of boys, and sing in the choir? So afterwards he says to the player, *Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.*

JOHNSON.

“Than they can sing,” does not merely mean, “than they keep the voices of boys,” but is to be understood literally. He is speaking of the choir boys of St. Paul’s. MALONE.

⁸ I should have been very much surprised if I had not found Ben Jonson among the writers here alluded to. STEEVENS.

⁹ To provoke any animal to rage, is to *tarre him*. The word is said to come from the Greek *ταρσσω*. JOHNSON.

² i. e. they not only carry away the world, but the world-bearer too: alluding to the story of Hercules’s relieving Atlas. This is humorous.

WARBURTON.

The allusion may be to the *Globe* playhouse on the Bankside, the sign of which was *Hercules carrying the Globe*. STEEVENS.

I suppose Shakspeare meant, that the boys drew greater audiences than the elder players of the *Globe* theatre. MALONE.

³ I do not wonder that the new players have so suddenly risen to reputation, my uncle supplies another example of the facility with which honour is conferred upon new claimants. JOHNSON.

It is not very strange: &c. was originally Hamlet’s observation, on being informed that the old tragedians of the city were not so followed as they used to be; but Dr. Johnson’s explanation is certainly just, and this passage connects sufficiently well with that which now immediately precedes it. MALONE.

cats a-piece, for his picture in little.⁴ 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of trumpets within.*]

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands. Come then : the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony : let me comply with you in this garb ;⁵ lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome : but my uncle-father, and aunt-mother, are deceived.

Guil. In what, my dear lord ?

Ham. I am but mad north-north west : when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.⁶

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen !

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern ;—and you too ;—at each ear a hearer : that great baby, you see there, is not yet out of his swadling-clouts.

Ros. Haply, he's the second time come to them ; for, they say, an old man is twice a child.

Ham.

⁴ ——— in little.] i. e. in miniature. STEEVENS.

⁵ Sir T. Hanmer reads, —*let me compliment with you.* JOHNSON.

To *comply* is again apparently used in the sense of—to *compliment*, in *Act V* : “ He did *comply* with his dug, before he suck'd it.” STEEVENS.

⁶ This was a common proverbial speech. The Oxford editor alters it to,—*I know a hawk from an heronshaw*, as if the other had been a corruption of the players ; whereas the poet found the proverb thus corrupted in the mouths of the people : so that the critick's alteration only serves to shew us the original of the expression. WARBURTON.

Similarity of sound is the source of many literary corruptions. In Holborn we have still the sign of the *Bull and Gate*, which exhibit but an odd combination of images. It was originally (as I learn from the title-page of an old play) the *Boulogne Gate*, i. e. one of the gates of *Boulogne* ; designed perhaps as a compliment to Henry VIII. who took the place in 1544.

The *Boulogne mouth*, now the *Bull and Mouth*, had probably the same origin, i. e. the *mouth of the Harbour of Boulogne*. STEEVENS.

The *Boulogne Gate* was not one of the gates of *Boulogne*, but of *Calais* ; and is frequently mentioned as such by Hall and Holinshed. RITSON.

Ham. I will prophecy, he comes to tell me of the players ; mark it.—You say right, fir : o'monday morning ; 'twas then, indeed.

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. Whe^r ofcius was an actor in Rome.—

Pol. The actors are come hither my lord.

Ham. Buz, buz !⁷

Pol. Upon my honour,——

Ham. Then came each actor on his ass,⁸——

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, [tragical-historical, tragical-comical, historical-pastoral,] scene individable, or poem unlimited : Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light.⁹ For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men.²

Ham.

⁷ Mere idle talk, the *buz* of the vulgar. JOHNSON.

Buz, buz! are, I believe, only interjections employed to interrupt Polonius. Ben Jonson uses them often for the same purpose, as well as Middleton. STEEVENS.

Buz used to be an interjection at Oxford, when any one began a story that was generally known before. P. ACKSTONE.

Buzzer, in a subsequent scene in this play, is used for a *busy talker*. It is, therefore, probable from the answer of Polonius, that *buz* was used, as Dr Johnson supposes, for an idle rumour without any foundation.

In Ben Jonson's *Staple of News*, the collector of mercantile intelligence is called *Ennifary Buz*. MALONE.

Whatever may be the origin of this phrase, or rather of this interjection, it is not unusual, even at this day, to cry *buz* to any person who begins to relate what the company had heard before. M. MASON.

⁸ This seems to be a line of a ballad. JOHNSON.

⁹ The tragedies of Seneca were translated into English by Thomas Newton, and others, and published first separate, at different times, and afterwards all together in 1581. One comedy of Plautus, viz. the *Menæchmi*, was likewise translated and published in 1595. STEEVENS.

I believe the frequency of plays performed at publick schools, suggested to Shakspeare the names of *Seneca* and *Plautus* as dramattick authors.

T. WARTON.

² All the modern editions have,—*the law of wit, and the liberty* ; but both my old copies have—*the law of writ*, I believe rightly. *Writ*, for *writing, composition*. *Wit* was not, in our author's time, taken either for *imagination*, or *acuteness*, or *both together*, but for *understanding*, for the faculty by which we apprehend and judge. Those who wrote of the human mind,

Ham. O *Jeptha*, judge of *Israel*,—what a treasure hadst thou!

Pol. What a treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why—*One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.*

Pol. Still on my daughter.

[*Aside.*

Ham. Am I not i'the right, old *Jeptha*?

Pol. If you call me *Jeptha*, my lord, I have a daughter, that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows then, my lord?

Ham. Why, *As by lot, God wot*,³ and then, you know, *It came to pass, As most like it was*,—The first row of the pious chançon⁴ will show you more; for look, my abridgement⁵ comes.

Enter

mind, distinguished its primary powers into *wit* and *will*. Ascham distinguishes *boys* of tardy and of active faculties into *quick wits* and *slow wits*. JOHNSON.

That *writ* is here used for *writing*, may be proved by the following passage in *Titus Andronicus*:

“Then all too late I bring this fatal *writ*.” STEEVENS.

The old copies are certainly right. *Writ* is used for *writing* by authors contemporary with Shakspeare. MALONE.

³ The old song from which these quotations are taken, I communicated to Dr. Percy, who has honoured it with a place in the second and third editions of his *Reliques of ancient English Poetry*. This story was also one of the favourite subjects of ancient tapestry. STEEVENS.

There is a Latin tragedy on the subject of *Jeptha*, by John Christopher in 1546, and another by Buchanan, in 1554. A third by Du Plessis Mornay is mentioned by Prynne in his *Histrionastix*. The same subject had probably been introduced on the English stage. MALONE.

⁴ It is *pons chansons* in the first folio edition. The old ballads sung on bridges, and from thence called *Pons chansons*. Hamlet is here repeating ends of old songs. POPE.

It is *pons chansons* in the quarto too. I know not whence the *rubrick* has been brought, yet it has not the appearance of an arbitrary addition. The titles of old ballads were never printed red; but perhaps *rubrick* may stand for *marginal explanation*. JOHNSON.

There are five large volumes of ballads in Mr. Pepys's collection in Magdalen College library, Cambridge, some as ancient as Henry VII's reign, and not one red letter upon any one of the titles. GREY.

The words, *of the rubrick* were first inserted by Mr. Rowe, in his edition in 1709. The old quartos in 1604, 1605, and 1611, read *pious chan-*

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters! welcome, all:—I am glad to see thee well:—welcome, good friends—O, old friend! Why thy face is valanced⁶ since I saw thee last; Com'st thou to beard me⁷ in Denmark?—What? my young lady and mistress! By-'r-lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven, than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.⁸ Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not crack'd

fan, which gives the sense wanted, and I have accordingly inserted it in the text.

The *pious chansons* were a kind of *Christmas carols*, containing some scriptural history thrown into loose rhymes, and sung about the streets by the common people when they went at that season to solicit alms. Hamlet is here repeating some scraps from a song of this kind, and when Polonius enquires what follows them, he refers him to the *first row* (i. e. division) of one of these, to obtain the information he wanted. STEEVENS.

⁵ He calls the players afterwards, *the brief chronicles of the times*; but I think he now means only *those who will shorten my talk*. JOHNSON.

An *abridgment* is used for a dramattick piece in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V. sc. 1:

“ Say what *abridgment* have you for this evening?”

but it does not commodiously apply to this passage. STEEVENS.

⁶ i. e. fringed with a beard. The valance is the fringes or drapery hanging round the tester of a bed. MALONE.

The folios read *valiant*, which seems right. The comedian was probably “bearded like the pard.” RITSON.

⁷ To *beard*, anciently signified to *set at defiance*. STEEVENS.

⁸ A *chioppine* is a high shoe, or rather, a clog, worn by the Italians.

STEEVENS.

Tom Coryat in his *Crudities*, 1611, p. 262, calls them *chapineys*, and gives the following account of them: “There is one thing used of the Venetian women, and some others dwelling in the cities and townes subject to the signiory of Venice, that is not to be observed (I thinke) amongst any other women in Christendome: which is so common in Venice, that no woman whatsoever goeth without it, either in her house or abroad, *a thing made of wood and covered with leather of sundry colors, some with white, some redde, some yellow*. It is called a chapiney, which they wear under their shoes. Many of them are curiously painted; some also of them I have seen fairely gilt: so uncomely a thing (in my opinion) that it is pittie this foolish custom is not cleane banished and exterminated out of the citie. *There are many of these chapineys of a great height even half a yard high*, which maketh many of their women that are very short, seeme much taller than the tallest women we have in England.

Also

crack'd within the ring.⁹—Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers,² fly at any thing we see: We'll have a speech straight; Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

1 *Play*. What speech, my lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once,—but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once: for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general:³ but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgements, in such matters, cried in the top of mine,⁴) an excel-

Also I have heard it observed among them, that by how much the nobler a woman is, by so much the higher are her *chapineys*. All their gentlewomen and most of their wives and widows that are of any wealth, are assisted and supported eyther by men or women, when they walke abroad, to the end they may not fall. They are borne up most commonly by the left arme, otherwise they might quickly take a fall.

REED.

⁹ That is, *crack'd too much for use*. This is said to a young player who acted the parts of women. JOHNSON.

² The amusement of falconry was much cultivated in France. In *All's well that ends well*, Shakspeare has introduced an *astringer* or falconer at the French court. Mr. Tollet, who has mentioned the same circumstance, likewise adds that it is said in *Sir Thomas Browne's Tracts*, p. 116, that “the French seem to have been the first and noblest falconers in the western part of Europe;” and, that the French king sent over his falconers to show that sport to king James the First.” See Weldon's *Court of King James*. STEEVENS.

³ Giles Fletcher in his *Russe Commonwealth*, 1591, p. 11, says in Russia they have divers kinds of fish “very good and delicate: as the Bellouga & Bellougina of four or five elnes long, the Ostrina & Sturgeon, but not so thick nor long. These four kind of fish breed in the Wolgha and are caught in great plenty, and served thence into the whole realme for a good food. Of the roes of these four kinds they make very great store of Icarry or Caveary.” See also Mr. Ritson's *Remarks, &c.* on Shakspeare, (edit. 1778,) p. 199. REED.

Ben Jonson has ridiculed the introduction of these foreign delicacies in his *Cynthia's Revels*: “He doth learn to eat Anchovies, Macaroni, Bovolli, Fagioli, and Caviare,” &c. STEEVENS.

Florio in his *Italian Dictionary*, 1598, defines, *Caviaro*, “a kinde of salt meat, used in Italie, like black sope; it is made of the roes of fishes.”

Lord Clarendon uses *the general for the people*, in the same manner as it is used here. Book V. p. 530. MALONE.

⁴ i. e. whose judgement I had the highest opinion of. WARBURTON.

excellent play; well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty⁵ as cunning. I remember, one said, there were no fallers in the lines, to make the matter savoury; nor no matter in the phrase, that might indite⁶ the author of affection: but call'd it, an honest method,⁷ as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: If it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see;—

*The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,*⁸—'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus.

The

I think it means only that *were bigger than mine*. JOHNSON.

Whose judgement, in such matters, was in much higher vogue than mine. HEATH.

Perhaps it means only—whose judgement was more clamorously delivered than mine. We still say of a bawling actor, that he speaks *on the top of his voice*. STEEVENS.

To *over-top* is a hunting term applied to a dog when he gives more tongue than the rest of the cry. To this, I believe, Hamlet refers, and he afterwards mentions a *CRY of players*. HENLEY.

⁵ *Modesty* for *simplicity*. WARBURTON.

⁶ *Indite*, for *convict*. WARBURTON.

i. e. convict the author of being a fantastical *affected* writer. Maria calls Malvolio an *affection'd ass*, i. e. an *affected ass*; and in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Nathaniel tells the Pedant, that his reasons “*have been witty, without affection*.” STEEVENS.

⁷ Hamlet is telling how much his judgement differed from that of others. *One said, there was no fallers in the lines, &c. but called it an honest method*. The author probably gave it,—*But I called it an honest method, &c.* JOHNSON.

Honest, for *chaste*. WARBURTON.

⁸ Mr. Malone once observed to me, that Mr. Capell supposed the speech uttered by the *Player* before *Hamlet*, to have been taken from an ancient drama, entitled “*Dido Queen of Carthage*.” I had not then the means of justifying or confuting his remark, the piece alluded to having escaped the hands of the most liberal and industrious collectors of such curiosities. Since, however, I have met with this performance, and am therefore at liberty to pronounce that it did not furnish our author with more than a general hint for his description of the death of Priam, &c.; unless with reference to

“ ——— the whiff and wind of his fell sword

“ The unnerved father falls, ——— ”

we read, ver.

*The rugged Pyrrhus,—he, whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
Now is he total gules;⁹ horridly trick'd²
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons;
Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
To their lord's murder: Roasted in wrath, and fire,
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandfire Priam seeks,—So proceed you.*

Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken; with good accent, and good discretion.

*1. Play. Anon he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command: Unequal match'd,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage, strikes wide;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base; and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i'the air to stick:
So, as a painted tyrant,³ Pyrrhus stood;*

And,

“And with the wind thereof the king fell down;”
and can make out a resemblance between

“So as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood;”
and ver.

“So leaning on his sword, he stood stone still.”

Many of the subsequent lines are surely more ridiculous in themselves, than even Shakspeare's happiest vein of burlesque or parody could have made them. STEEVENS.

⁹ *Gules* is a term in the barbarous jargon peculiar to heraldry, and signifies red. STEEVENS.

² i. e. smeared, painted. An heraldick term. MALONE.

³ Shakspeare was probably here thinking of the tremendous personages often represented in old tapestry, whose uplifted swords stick in the air, and do nothing. MALONE.

*And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.*

*But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
As hush as death: anon, the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region: So, after Pyrrhus' pause,
A roused vengeance sets him new a work;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.—*

*Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends!*

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your beard.—Pr'ythee,
say on:—He's for a jig,⁴ or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps:—
say on: come to Hecuba.

1. *Play.* But who, ah woe! had seen the mobled
queen ⁵——

Ham.

⁴ A jig, in our poet's time, signified a ludicrous metrical composition, as well as a dance. Here it is used in the former sense. MALONE.

⁵ *Mobled* or *mabled* signifies veiled. So, Sandys speaking of the Turkish women, says, *their heads and faces are mabled in fine linen, that no more is to be seen of them than their eyes.* Travels. WARBURTON.

Mobled signifies buddled, grossly covered. JOHNSON.

I meet with this word in Shirley's *Gentleman of Venice*:

“The moon does *mobble* up herself.” FARMER.

Mobled, is, I believe, no more than a depravation of *muffled*. It is thus corrupted in *Ogilby's Fables*, Second Part:

“*Mobbled* nine days in my considering cap,

“Before my eyes beheld the blessed day.”

In the West this word is still used in the same sense; and that is the meaning of *mobble* in Dr. Farmer's quotation. HOLT WHITE.

The *mabled* queen, (or *mobled* queen, as it is spelt in the quarto,) means, the queen attired in a large, coarse, and careless head-dress. A few lines lower we are told she had “a clout upon that head, where late the diadem stood.”

To

Ham. The mobled queen?

Pol. That's good? mobled queen is good.

1. Play. *Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames*

*With biffon rheum;⁶ a clout upon that head,
Where late the diadem stood; and, for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd:
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs;
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
(Unless things mortal move them not at all,)
Would have made milch⁷ the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods.*

Pol. Look, whether he has not turn'd his colour, and has tears in's eyes.—Pr'ythee, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon.—Good my lord, will you see the players well bestow'd? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstract, and brief chronicles, of the time: After your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. Odd's bodikin, man, much better: Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: The less they deserve,

To *mab*, (which in the North is pronounced *mob*, and hence the spelling of the old copy in the present instance,) says Ray in his Dict. of North Country words, is "to dress carelessly. *Mabs* are *flatterns*."

The ordinary morning head-dress of ladies continued to be distinguished by the name of a *mab*, to almost the end of the reign of George the Second. The folio reads—the *inobled* queen. MALONE.

In the counties of Essex and Middlesex, this morning cap has always been called—a *mob*, and not a *mab*. My spelling of the word therefore agrees with its most familiar pronunciation. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Biffon* or *beesen*, i. e. blind. A word still in use in some parts of the North of England. STEEVENS.

⁷ Drayton in the 13th Song of his *Polyolbion* gives this epithet to dew: "Exhaling the *milch* dew," &c. STEEVENS.

deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Pol. Come, firs.

Ham. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow.
—Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the murder
of Gonzago?

1. Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll have it to-morrow night. You could, for
a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which
I would set down, and insert in't? could you not?

1. Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well.—Follow that lord; and look you mock
him not. [*Exeunt POLONIUS and Players.*] My good
friends, [*To Ros. and GUIL.*] I'll leave you till night:
you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good, my lord!

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

Ham. Ay, so, God be wi' you:—Now I am alone.
O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,⁸
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,

That,

⁸ It should seem from the complicated nature of such parts as Hamlet, Lear, &c. that the time of Shakspeare had produced some excellent performers. He would scarce have taken the pains to form characters which he had no prospect of seeing represented with force and propriety on the stage.

His plays indeed, by their own power, must have given a different turn to acting, and almost new-created the performers of his age. Mysteries, Moralities, and Enterludes, afforded no materials for art to work on, no discriminations of character, or varieties of appropriated language. From tragedies like *Cambyfes*, *Tamburlaine*, and *Jeronymo*, nature was wholly banished; and the comedies of *Gammer Gurton*, *Common Condyceons*, and *The Old Wives Tale*, might have had justice done to them by the lowest order of human beings.

Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius altæ

was wanting, when the dramas of Shakspeare made their first appearance; and to these we were certainly indebted for the excellence of actors who could never have improved so long as their sensibilities were unawakened, their memories burthened only by pedantick or puritanical declamation, and their manners vulgarized by pleasantries of as low an origin.

STEEVENS.

That, from her working, all his visage wann'd;⁹
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,²
 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
 With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
 For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,³

That

⁹ [The folio—*warm'd*.] This might do, did not the old quarto lead us to a more exact and pertinent reading, which is—visage *wan'd*; i. e. turned *pale* or *wan*. For so the visage appears when the mind is thus affectioned, and not *warm'd* or *flush'd*. WARBURTON.

² *Wan'd* (*wann'd* it should have been spelt,) is the reading of the quarto, which Dr. Warburton, I think rightly, restored. The folio reads *warm'd*, for which Mr. Steevens contends in the following note:

“The working of the soul, and the effort to shed tears, will give a colour to the actor's face, instead of taking it away. The visage is always *warm'd* and flushed by any unusual exertion in a passionate speech; but no performer was ever yet found, I believe, whose feelings were of such exquisite sensibility as to produce paleness in any situation in which the drama could place him. But if players were indeed possessed of that power, there is no such circumstance in the speech uttered before Hamlet, as could introduce the *wanness* for which Dr. Warburton contends.”

Whether an actor *can produce paleness*, it is, I think, unnecessary to enquire. That Shakspeare *thought* he could, and considered the speech in question as likely to produce *wanness*, is proved decisively by the words which he has put into the mouth of Polonius in this scene; which add such support to the original reading, that I have without hesitation restored it. Immediately after the Player has finished his speech, Polonius exclaims,

“Look, whether he has not *turn'd his colour*, and has *tears in his eyes*.” Here we find the effort to shed tears, *taking away*, not *giving* a colour. MALONE.

The word *aspect* (as Dr. Farmer very properly observes) was in Shakspeare's time accented on the second syllable. The folio exhibits the passage as I have printed it. STEEVENS.

³ It is plain Shakspeare alludes to a story told of Alexander the cruel tyrant of Pherae in Thessaly, who seeing a famous tragedian act in the Troades of Euripides, was so sensibly touched that he left the theatre before the play was ended; being ashamed, as he owned, that he who never pitied those he murdered, should weep at the sufferings of *Hecuba* and *Andromache*. See Plutarch in the Life of Pelopidas. UPTON.

Shakspeare, it is highly probable, had read the life of Pelopidas, but I see no ground for supposing there is here an allusion to it. Hamlet is not ashamed of being seen to weep at a theatrical exhibition, but mortified that a player, in a *dream of passion*, should appear more agitated by fictitious sorrow, than the prince was by a real calamity. MALONE.

That he should weep for her? What would he do,
 Had he the motive and the cue for passion,⁴
 That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
 And cleave the general ear⁵ with horrid speech;
 Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,
 Confound the ignorant; and amaze, indeed,
 The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,
 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
 Like John a-dreams,⁶ unpregnant⁷ of my cause,
 And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
 Upon whose property, and most dear life,
 A damn'd defeat was made.⁸ Am I a coward?
 Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
 Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
 Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i'th' throat,
 As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
 Ha!

Why, I should take it: for it cannot be,
 But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall
 To make oppression bitter; or, ere this,
 I should have fatted all the region kites
 With this slave's offal: Bloody, bawdy villain!

Remorse-

⁴ The *hint*, the *direction*. JOHNSON.

This phrase is theatrical, and occurs at least a dozen times in our author's plays. STEEVENS.

⁵ The ear of all mankind. So before,—*Caviare to the general*, that is, to the *multitude*. JOHNSON.

⁶ *John-a-dreams*, i. e. of *dreams*, means only *John the dreamer*; a nick-name, I suppose, for any ignorant silly fellow. Thus the puppet formerly thrown at during the season of Lent, was called *Jack-a-lent*, and the ignis fatuus *Jack-a-lantern*. *John-a-droynes* however, if not a corruption of this nick-name, seems to have been some well known character, as I have met with more than one allusion to him. STEEVENS.

⁷ *Unpregnant*, for *having no due sense of*. WARBURTON.

Rather, *not quickened with a new desire of vengeance; not seeming with revenge*. JOHNSON.

⁸ *Defeat*, for *destruction*. WARBURTON.

Rather, *disposition*. JOHNSON.

The word *defeat*, (which certainly means *destruction* in the present instance) is very licentiously used by the old writers. Shakspeare in *Othello* employs it yet more quaintly.—“*Defeat thy favour with an usurped beard.*” STEEVENS.

Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless⁹ villain!
 Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave!
 That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
 Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
 And fall a cursing, like a very drab,
 A scullion!
 Fie upon't! foh! About my brains!² Humph! I have
 heard,
 That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,³
 Have by the very cunning of the scene
 Been struck so to the soul, that presently
 They have proclaim'd their malefactions:
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
 Play something like the murder of my father,
 Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
 I'll tent him⁴ to the quick; if he do blench,⁵
 I know my course. The spirit, that I have seen,
 May be a devil: and the devil hath power
 To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and, perhaps,
 Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,
 (As he is very potent with such spirits,)
 Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds
 More relative than this:⁶ The play's the thing,
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [Exit.

⁹ ———kindless—] Unnatural. JOHNSON.

² Wits, to your work. Brain, go about the present business.

JOHNSON.

This expression (which seems a parody on the naval one, — *about ship*!) occurs in the Second Part of the *Iron Age*, by Heywood, 1632.

“My brain about again! for thou hast found

“New projects now to work on.”

About, my brain! therefore, (as Mr. M. Mason observes) appears to signify, “be my thoughts shifted into a contrary direction.” STEEVENS.

³ A number of these stories are collected together by Thomas Heywood, in his *Actor's Vindication*. STEEVENS.

⁴ ———tent him—] Search his wounds. JOHNSON.

⁵ If he *sprink*, or start. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Relative*, for *convictive*. WARBURTON.

Convictive is only the consequential sense. *Relative* is nearly related, closely connected. JOHNSON.

ACT

A C T III. S C E N E I.

A Room in the Castle.

Enter King, Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. And can you by no drift of conference
Get from him, why he puts on this confusion;
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Ros. He does confess, he feels himself distracted;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded;
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.⁷

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players

We

⁷ This is given as the description of the conversation of a man whom the speaker found not forward to be sounded; and who kept aloof when they would bring him to a confession: but such a description can never pass but at cross-purposes. Shakspeare certainly wrote it just the other way:

*Most free of question; but, of our demands,
Niggard in his reply.*

That this is the true reading, we need but turn back to the preceding scene, for Hamlet's conduct—to be satisfied. WARBURTON.

Warburton forgets that by *question*, Shakspeare does not usually mean interrogatory, but *discourse*; yet in which ever sense the word be taken, this account given by Rosencrantz agrees but ill with the scene between him and Hamlet, as actually represented. M. MASON.

Slow to begin conversation, but free enough in his answers to our demands. Guildenstern has just said that Hamlet kept aloof when they wished to bring him to confess the cause of his distraction: Rosencrantz therefore here must mean, that up to that point, till they touch'd on that, he was free enough in his answers. MALONE.

We o'er-raught⁸ on the way : of these we told him ;
 And there did seem in him a kind of joy
 To hear of it : They are about the court ;
 And, as I think, they have already order
 This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true :

And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties,
 To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart ; and it doth much content me
 To hear him so inclin'd.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
 And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too.

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither ;

That he, as 'twere by accident, may here

Affront Ophelia :⁹

Her father, and myself (lawful espials,)

Will so bestow ourselves, that, seeing, unseen,

We may of their encounter frankly judge ;

And gather by him, as he is behav'd,

If't be the affliction of his love, or no,

That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you :

And, for your part, Ophelia, I do wish,

That your good beauties be the happy cause

Of Hamlet's wildness ; so shall I hope, your virtues

Will bring him to his wonted way again,

To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may.

[*Exit QUEEN.*]

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here :—Gracious, so please you,
 We will bestow ourselves :—Read on this book ;

[*To OPHELIA.*]

That show of such an exercise may colour

Your loneliness.—We are oft to blame in this,—

'Tis

⁸ *Over-raught* is *over-reached*, that is, *over-took*. JOHNSON.

⁹ *To affront*, is only to meet directly. JOHNSON.

'Tis too much prov'd,²—that, with devotion's visage,
And pious action, we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. O, 'tis too true! how smart
A lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beauty'd with plast'ring art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it,³
Than is my deed to my most painted word:
O heavy burden!

[*Aside.*

Pol. I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Exeunt King and POLONIUS.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. To be, or not to be,⁴ that is the question:

Whether

² It is found by too frequent experience. JOHNSON.

³ That is, *compared with* the thing that helps it. JOHNSON.

⁴ Of this celebrated soliloquy, which bursting from a man distracted with contrariety of desires, and overwhelmed with the magnitude of his own purposes, is connected rather in the speaker's mind, than on his tongue, I shall endeavour to discover the train, and to shew how one sentiment produces another.

Hamlet, knowing himself injured in the most enormous and atrocious degree, and seeing no means of redress, but such as must expose him to the extremity of hazard, meditates on his situation in this manner: *Before I can form any rational scheme of action under this pressure of distress, it is necessary to decide, whether, after our present state, we are to be, or not to be. That is the question, which, as it shall be answered, will determine, whether 'tis nobler, and more suitable to the dignity of reason, to suffer the outrages of fortune patiently, or to take arms against them, and by opposing end them, though perhaps with the loss of life. If to die, were to sleep, no more, and by a sleep to end the miseries of our nature, such a sleep were devoutly to be wished; but if to sleep in death, be to dream, to retain our powers of sensibility, we must pause to consider, in that sleep of death what dreams may come. This consideration makes calamity so long endured; for who would bear the vexations of life, which might be ended by a bare bodkin, but that he is afraid of something in unknown futurity? This fear it is that gives efficacy to conscience, which, by turning the mind upon this regard, chills the ardour of resolution, checks the vigour of enterprize, and makes the current of desire stagnate in inactivity.*

We may suppose that he would have applied these general observations to his own case, but that he discovered Ophelia. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's explication of the first five lines of this passage is surely wrong. Hamlet is not deliberating whether after our present state we are
to

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
The flings and arrows of outrageous fortune;⁵
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,⁶

And,

to exist or not, but whether he should continue to live, or put an end to his life: as is pointed out by the second and the three following lines, which are manifestly a paraphrase on the first; "whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer, &c. or to take arms." The question concerning our existence in a future state is not considered till the tenth line:—"To sleep! perchance, to *dream*;" &c. The train of Hamlet's reasoning from the middle of the fifth line, "If to die, were to sleep," &c. Dr. Johnson has marked out with his usual accuracy. MALONE.

⁵ "Homines nos ut esse meminerimus, eâ lege natos, ut omnibus telis fortunæ proposita sit vita nostra." Cic. Epist. Fam. v. 16.

STEEVENS.

⁶ *A sea of troubles* among the Greeks grew into a proverbial usage; κακῶν θαλάσσα, κακῶν τρικυμία. So that the expression figuratively means, the troubles of human life, which flow in upon us, and encompass us round, like a sea. THEOBALD.

Mr. Pope proposes *siege*. I know not why there should be so much solicitude about this metaphor. Shakspeare breaks his metaphors often, and in this desultory speech there was less need of preserving them.

JOHNSON.

One cannot but wonder that the smallest doubt should be entertained concerning an expression which is so much in Shakspeare's manner; yet, to preserve the integrity of the metaphor, Dr. Warburton reads *assail* of troubles. In the *Prometheus Vincetus* of Æschylus a similar imagery is found:

Δυσχειμερον γε πελαγος αττηςας δυης.

"The stormy sea of dire calamity."

and in the same play, as an anonymous writer has observed, (*Gent. Magazine*, Aug. 1772,) we have a metaphor no less harsh than that of the text:

Θαλεροι δε λογοι παιουσ' εικη

Στυγνης προς κυμασιν ατης.

"My plaintive words in vain confusedly beat

"Against the waves of hateful misery."

Shakspeare might have found the very phrase that he has employed, in *The Tragedy of Queen Cordila*, MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES, 1575, which undoubtedly he read:

"For lacke of frendes to tell my seas of gitleffe smart."

MALONE.

Menander uses this very expression. *Fragm.* p. 22. Amstel. 12mo. 1719:

Εις πελαγος αυτον εμβαλεις γαρ πραγματων.

"In mare molestiarum te conjicies." HOLT WHITE.

And, by opposing, end them?—To die,—to sleep,⁷
 No more;—and, by a sleep, to say we end
 The heart-ach, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die;—to sleep;
 To sleep! perchance to dream;—ay, there's the rub;
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,⁸
 Must give us pause: There's the respect,⁹
 That makes calamity of so long life:
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,²

The

⁷ This passage is ridiculed in *The Scornful Lady* of Beaumont and Fletcher, as follow:

“ — be deceas'd, that is, asleep, for so the word is taken. *To sleep, to die; to die, to sleep*; a very figure, sir.” &c. &c. STEEVENS.

⁸ i. e. turmoil, bustle. WARBURTON.

⁹ i. e. the consideration. MALONE.

² The evils here complained of are not the product of time or duration simply, but of a corrupted age or manners. We may be sure, then, that Shakspeare wrote:

— *the whips and scorns* of th' time.

and the description of the evils of a corrupt age, which follows, confirms this emendation. WARBURTON.

It may be remarked, that Hamlet, in his enumeration of miseries, forgets, whether properly or not, that he is a prince, and mentions many evils to which inferior stations only are exposed. JOHNSON.

I think we might venture to read—*the whips and scorns of the times*, i. e. of times satirical as the age of Shakspeare, which probably furnished him with the idea.

In the reigns of Elizabeth and James (particularly in the former) there was more illiberal private abuse and peevish satire published, than in any others I ever knew of, except the present one. I have many of these publications, which were almost all pointed at individuals.

Whips and scorns are surely as inseparable companions, as publick punishment and infamy.

Quips, the word which Dr. Johnson would introduce, is derived, by all etymologists, from *whips*.

Hamlet is introduced as reasoning on a question of general concernment. He therefore takes in all such evils as could befall mankind in general, without considering himself at present as a prince, or wishing to avail himself of the few exemptions which high place might once have claimed.

In part of King James I's *Entertainment passing to his Coronation*, by Ben Jonson and Decker. is the following line, and note on that line:

“ And

The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin;³ who would fardels bear,
 To grunt and sweat⁴ under a weary life;
 But that the dread of something after death,—
 The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
 No traveller returns,⁵—puzzles the will;

And

“*And first account of years, of months, OF TIME.*”

“*By time we understand the present.*” This explanation affords the sense for which I have contended, and without change. STEEVENS.

³ The first expression probably alluded to the writ of discharge, which was formerly granted to those barons and knights who personally attended the king on any foreign expedition. This discharge was called a *quietus*.

It is at this time the term for the acquittance which every sheriff receives on settling his accounts at the exchequer.

A *bodkin* was the ancient term for a *small dagger*. STEEVENS.

By a *bare bodkin*, does not perhaps mean, “by so little an instrument as a dagger,” but “*by an unsheathed dagger.*”

In the account which Mr. Steevens has given of the original meaning of the term *quietus*, after the words, “who personally attended the king on any foreign expedition,” should have been added,—*and were therefore exempted from the claims of scutage, or a tax on every knight's fee.*

MALONE.

⁴ Thus the old copies. It is undoubtedly the true reading, but can scarcely be borne by modern ears. JOHNSON.

I apprehend that it is the duty of an editor to exhibit what his author wrote, and not to substitute what may appear to the present age preferable: and Dr. Johnson was of the same opinion. See his note on the word *bugger-mugger*, Act IV. sc. v. I have therefore, though with some reluctance, adhered to the old copies, however unpleasing this word may be to the ear. On the stage, without doubt, an actor is at liberty to substitute a less offensive word. To the ears of our ancestors it probably conveyed no unpleasing sound; for we find it used by Chaucer and others:

“But never gront he at no stroke but on,

“Or elles at two, but if his storie lie.”

The Monkes Tale, v. 14627, Tyrwhitt's edit.

MALONE.

⁵ This has been cavilled at by Lord Orrery and others, but without reason. The idea of a *traveller* in Shakspeare's time, was of a person who gave an account of his adventures. Every voyage was a *Discovery*. John Taylor has “*A Discovery, by sea from London to Salisbury.*”

FARMER

VOL. VIII.

T

This

And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
 And enterprizes of great pith⁶ and moment,
 With this regard, their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action.—Soft you, now!
 The fair Ophelia:—Nymph, in thy orisons
 Be all my sins remember'd.⁷

Oph.

This passage has been objected to by others on a ground which, at the first view of it, seems more plausible. Hamlet himself, it is objected, has had ocular demonstration that travellers do sometimes return from this strange country.

I formerly thought this an inconsistency. But this objection also is founded on a mistake. Our poet without doubt in the passage before us intended to say, that from the *unknown* regions of the dead no traveller returns, with all his *corporal powers*; such as he who goes on a voyage of *discovery* brings back, when he returns to the port from which he sailed. The traveller whom Hamlet had seen, though he appeared in the same habit which he had worn in his life time, was nothing but a shadow; “invulnerable as the air,” and consequently *incorporeal*.

If, says the objector, the traveller has once reached this coast, it is not an undiscovered country. But by *undiscovered*, Shakspeare, meant not undiscovered by departed spirits, but, undiscovered or unknown to “such fellows as us, who crawl beneath earth and heaven;” *superis incognita tellus*. In this sense every country, of which the traveller does not return *alive* to give an account, may be said to be *undiscovered*. The ghost has given us no account of the region from whence he came, being, as he has himself informed us, “forbid to tell the secrets of his prison-house.”

MALONE.

Perhaps this is another instance of Shakspeare's acquaintance with his Bible: “Afore I goe thither, from whence I shall not turne againe, even to the lande of darknesse and shadowe of death; yea into that darke cloudie lande and deadlie shadowe whereas is no order, but terrible feare as in the darknesse.” *Job*, ch. x.

“The way that I must goe is at hande, but whence I shall not turne againe,” *Ibid.* ch. 16.

I quote Cranmer's Bible. DOUCE.

⁶ Thus the folio. The quartos read, of great *pitch*. STEEVENS.

Pitch seems to be the better reading. The allusion is to the *pitching* or throwing *the bar*;—a manly exercise, usual in country villages. RITSON.

⁷ This is a touch of nature. Hamlet, at the sight of Ophelia does not immediately recollect, that he is to personate madness, but makes her an address grave and solemn, such as the foregoing meditation excited in his thoughts. JOHNSON.

Oph. Good my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thank you; well.

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honour'd lord, you know right well, you did;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath compos'd
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind,
Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha! are you honest?

Oph. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest, and fair, you should admit no
discourse to your beauty.⁸

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than
with honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner
transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force
of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness:⁹ this was
some time a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I
did love you once.

Oph.

⁸ This is the reading of all the modern editions, and is copied from the quarto. The folio reads,—*your honesty* should admit no discourse to your beauty. The true reading seems to be this,—*If you be honest and fair, you should admit your honesty to no discourse with your beauty.* This is the sense evidently required by the process of the conversation. JOHNSON.

The reply of Ophelia proves beyond doubt, that this reading is wrong: The reading of the folio appears to be the right one, and requires no amendment.—“Your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty,” means,—“Your honesty should not admit your beauty to any discourse with her;” which is the very sense that Johnson contends for, and expressed with sufficient clearness. M. MASON.

⁹ The modern editors read—*its* likeness; but the text is right. Shakespeare and his contemporaries frequently use the personal for the neutral pronoun. MALONE.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me : for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we shall relish of it : I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery ; Why would'st thou be a breeder of finners ? I am myself indifferent honest ; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better, my mother had not borne me : I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious ; with more offences at my beck² than I have thoughts to put them in,³ imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in : What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven ? We are arrant knaves, all ; believe none of us : Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father ?

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him ; that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Oph. O, help him, you sweet heavens !

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry ; Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery ; farewell : Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool ; for wise men know well enough, what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go ; and quickly too. Farewell.

Oph. Heavenly powers, restore him !

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough ;⁴ God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another :⁵ you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name
God's

² That is, *always ready to come about me.* STEEVENS.

³ *To put a thing into thought, is to think on it.* JOHNSON.

⁴ This is according to the quarto ; the folio, for *painting*, has *pratlings*. and for *face* has *pace*, which agrees with what follows, *you jig, you amble.* Probably the author wrote both. I think the common reading best.

JOHNSON.

I would continue to read, *paintings*, because these destructive aids of beauty seem, in the time of Shakspeare, to have been general objects of satire. STEEVENS.

⁵ In *Guzman de Alfarache*, 1623, p. 13, we have an invective against painting in which is a similar passage : " O filthinesse, above all filthinesse ! O affront, above all other affronts ! that God having given thee one face, thou shouldst abuse his image and make thyselfe another." REED.

God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance:⁶
Go to; I'll no more of't; it hath made me mad. I say,
we will have no more marriages: those that are married
already, all but one, shall live;⁷ the rest shall keep as they
are. To a nunnery, go. [Exit HAMLET.

Oph. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword:⁸
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion,⁹ and the mould of form,²
The observ'd of all observers! quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his musick vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune³ and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth,
Blasted with ecstasy:⁴ O, woe is me!
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter

⁶ You mistake by *wanton* affectation, and pretend to mistake by *ignorance*. JOHNSON.

⁷ By the one who shall not live, he means his step-father. MALONE.

⁸ The poet certainly meant to have placed his words thus:
The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword;
otherwise the excellence of *tongue* is appropriated to the *soldier*, and the *scholar*
wears the *sword*. WARNER.

This regulation is needless. So, in *Tarquin and Lucrece*:

“Princes are the *glass*, the *school*, the *book*,
“Where subjects eyes do *learn*, do *read*, do *look*.”

And in *Quintilian*: “*Multum agit sexus, ætas, conditio; ut in fœminis, senibus, pupillis, liberos, parentes, conjuges, alligantibus.*” FARMER.

⁹ “*Speculum consuetudinis.*” Cicero. STEEVENS.

² The model by whom all endeavoured to form themselves. JOHNSON.

³ Thus the folio. The quarto—out of *time*. STEEVENS.

These two words in the hand-writing of Shakspeare's age are almost indistinguishable, and hence are frequently confounded in the old copies. MALONE.

⁴ The word *ecstasy* was anciently used to signify some degree of alienation of mind.

So, Gawin Douglas, translating—*stetit acri fixa dolore*:

“In *ecstasy* she stood, and mad almost.” STEEVENS.

Re-enter King and POLONIUS.

King. Love! his affections do not that way tend;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,
O'er which his melancholy fits on brood;
And, I do doubt, the hatch, and the disclose,⁶
Will be some danger. Which for to prevent,
I have, in quick determination,
Thus set it down; He shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute:
Haply, the seas, and countries different,
With variable objects, shall expel
This something-fetted matter in his heart;
Whereon his brains still beating, puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

Pol. It shall do well: But yet I do believe,
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia?
You need not tell us what lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play,
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief; let her be round with him;⁷
And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference: If she find him not,
To England send him; or confine him, where
Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so:
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. [Exeunt.]

⁶ This was the technical term. MALONE.

⁷ To be *round* with a person, is to reprimand him with freedom. So, in *A Mad World, my Masters*, by Middleton, 1608: "She's round with her i'faith." MALONE.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

*A Hall in the same.**Enter HAMLET, and certain Players.*

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious perriwig-pated⁸ fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings:⁹ who, for the most part, are capable of nothing

⁸ This is a ridicule on the quantity of false hair worn in Shakspeare's time, for wigs were not in common use till the reign of Charles II. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Julia says — "I'll get me such a colour'd perriwig."

Players, however, seem to have worn them most generally. So, in *Every Woman in her Humour*, 1609: "——as none wear hoods but monks and ladies; and feathers but fore-horses, &c;—none perriwigs but players and pictures. STEEVENS.

⁹ The meaner people then seem to have sat below, as they now sit in the upper gallery, who, not well understanding poetical language, were sometimes gratified by a mimical and mute representation of the drama, previous to the dialogue. JOHNSON.

Before each act of the tragedy of *Jocasta*, translated from Euripides, by Geo. Gascoigne and Fra. Kinwelmerth, the order of these dumb shows is very minutely described. This play was presented at Gray's-Inn by them in 1566. The mute exhibitions included in it are chiefly emblematical, nor do they display a picture of one single scene which is afterwards performed on the stage. In some other pieces I have observed, that they serve to introduce such circumstances as the limits of a play would not admit to be represented.

In short, dumb shows sometimes supplied deficiencies, and, at others, filled up the space of time which was necessary to pass while business was supposed to be transacted in foreign parts. With this method of preserving one of the unities, our ancestors appear to have been satisfied.

Ben Jonson mentions the *groundlings* with equal contempt. "The understanding gentlemen of the *ground* here."

In our early play-houses the pit had neither floor nor benches. Hence the term of *groundlings* for those who frequented it.

The *groundling*, in its primitive signification, means a fish which always keeps at the bottom of the water. STEEVENS.

nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise²: I would have such a fellow whipp'd for o'er-doing Termagant;³ it out-herods Herod:⁴ Pray you, avoid it.

1. *Play*. I warrant your honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'er-step not the

² i. e., have a *capacity* for nothing but dumb shows; understanding nothing else. So, in Heywood's *History of Women*, 1624: "I have therein imitated our *historical* and comical poets, that write to the stage; who, lest the auditory should be dull'd with serious discourses, in every act present some zany, with his mimick gesture, to breed in the less *capable* mirth and laughter.

MALONE.

I believe the meaning is, *shows, without words to explain them*. JOHNSON.

Rather, I believe shows which are too confusedly conducted to explain themselves.

I meet with one of these in Heywood's play of *The Four Prentices of London*, 1615, where the *Presenter* says:

"I must entreat your patience to forbear

"While we do feast your eye and starve your ear.

"For in *dumb shows*, which, were they writ at large,

"Would ask a long and tedious circumstance,

"Their infant fortunes I will soon express:" &c.

Then follow the *dumb shows*, which well deserve the character Hamlet has already given of this species of entertainment, as may be seen from the following passage: "Enter Tancred, with Bella Franca richly attired, she *scarcely* affecting him, though she makes *no show of it*." Surely this may be called an *inexplicable dumb show*. STEEVENS.

³ *Termagant* (says Dr. Percy) is the name given in the old romances to the god of the *Sarazens*; in which he is constantly linked with *Mabound*, or *Mohammed*. Thus in the legend of SYR GUY, the Soudan swears:

"So he'pe me *Mabowne* of might,

"And *Termagaunt* my God so bright."

Termagant is also mentioned by Spencer in his *Faery Queen*, and by Chaucer in *The Tale of Sir Topas*; and by Beaumont and Fletcher in *King or no King*, as follows: "This would make a saint swear like a soldier, and a soldier like *Termagant*." STEEVENS.

⁴ The character of *Herod* in the ancient mysteries, was always a violent one.

Chaucer, describing a parish clerk, in his *Miller's Tale*, says:

"He playeth *Herodes* on a skaffold high."

The parish clerks and other subordinate ecclesiastics appear to have been our first actors, and to have represented their characters on distinct pulpits or *scaffolds*. Thus, in one of the stage-directions to the 27th pageant in the Coventry collection already mentioned: "What tyme that processyon s entered into yt place, and the Herowdys taken his *schaffalde*, and Annas and Cayphas their *schaffaldys*," &c. STEEVENS.

the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirrour up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time,⁵ his form and pressure.⁶ Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one,⁷ must, in your allowance,⁸ o'er-weigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players,⁹ that I have
seen

⁵ The *age* of the *time* can hardly pass. May we not read, the *face* and *body*, or did the author write, the *page*? The *page* suits well with *form* and *pressure*, but ill with *body*. JOHNSON.

To exhibit the *form* and *pressure* of the *age* of the *time*, is, to represent the manners of the time suitable to the period that is treated of, according as it may be ancient, or modern. STEEVENS.

I can neither think this passage right as it stands, or approve of either of the amendments suggested by Johnson.—There is one more simple than either, that will remove every difficulty. Instead of *the very age and body of the time*," (from which it is hard to extract any meaning,) I read—*"every age and body of the time;"* and then the sense will be this:—*"Show virtue her own likeness, and every stage of life, every profession or body of men, its form and resemblance."* By *every age*, is meant the *different stages of life*;—by *every body*, the *various* fraternities, sorts, and ranks of mankind. M. MASON.

Perhaps Shakspeare did not mean to connect these words. It is the end of playing, says Hamlet, to shew the age in which we live, and the body of the time, its form and pressure: to delineate exactly the manners of the age, and the particular humour of the day. MALONE.

⁶ Resemblance, as in a *print*. JOHNSON.

⁷ The meaning is, *"the censure of one of which,"* and probably that should be the reading also. The present reading, though intelligible, is very licentious, especially in prose. M. MASON.

⁸ In your approbation. MALONE.

⁹ I would read thus: *"There be players, that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly (not to speak profanely) that neither having the accent nor the gait of Christian, Pagan, nor Mussulman, have so strutted and bellowed, that I thought some of nature's journeymen had made the men, and not made them well,"* &c. FARMER.

I have no doubt that our author wrote,—*"that I thought some of nature's journeymen had made them, and not made them well,"* &c. *Them* and *men* are frequently confounded in the old copies. In the present instance the compositor probably caught the word *men* from the last syllable of *journeymen*. Shakspeare could not mean to assert as a general truth, that nature's journeymen had made *men*, i. e. all mankind; for, if that were
the

seen play,—and heard others praise, and that highly,—not to speak it profanely,⁹ that, neither having the accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bellow'd, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1. *Play*. I hope, we have reform'd that indifferently with us.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those, that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them:² for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous; and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.—

[*Exeunt* Players.]

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord? will the king hear this piece of work?

Pol.

The case, these strutting players would have been on a footing with the rest of the species. Nature herself, the poet means to say, made all mankind except these strutting players, and they were made by Nature's journeymen.

This notion of Nature keeping a shop, and employing journeymen to form mankind, was common in Shakspeare's time. MALONE.

⁹ *Profanely* seems to relate, not to the praise which he has mentioned, but to the censure which he is about to utter. Any gross or indelicate language was called *profane*. JOHNSON.

² Stowe informs us, (p. 697, edit. 1615), that among the twelve players who were sworn the queen's servants in 1583, "were two rare men, viz. Thomas Wilson, for a quick delicate refined *extemporall witte*; and Richard Tarleton, for a wondrous plentiful, pleasant *extemporall witt*, &c."

Again, in *Tarleton's Newes from Purgatory*: "——I absented myself from all plaies, as wanting that merrie Roscius of plaiers that famosed all comedies so with his pleasant and *extemporall invention*."

This cause for complaint, however, against low comedians, is still more ancient. STEEVENS.

The clown very often addressed the audience, in the middle of the play, and entered into a contest of raillery and sarcasm with such of the audience as chose to engage with him. It is to this absurd practice that Shakspeare alludes. See the *Historical Account of our old English Theatres*, Vol. II. MALONE.

Pol. And the queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste.— [Exit POLONIUS.
Will you two help to hasten them?

Both. Ay, my lord.

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ham. What, ho; Horatio!

Enter HORATIO.

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

Hor. O, my dear lord,—

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter:
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,
To feed, and clothe thee? Why should the poor be
flatter'd?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp;
And crook the pregnant³ hinges of the knee,
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul⁴ was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish her election,
She hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest'd are those
Whose blood and judgement⁵ are so well co-mingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please: Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—

There

³ I believe the sense of *pregnant* in this place is, *quick, ready, prompt*.
JOHNSON.

⁴ Perhaps—my *clear* soul. JOHNSON.

Dear soul is an expression equivalent to the φίλα γένητα, φίλον ἦτορ, of Homer. STEEVENS.

⁵ According to the doctrine of the four humours, *desire* and *confidence* were seated in the blood, and *judgement* in the phlegm, and the due mixture of the humours made a perfect character. JOHNSON.

There is a play to-night before the king;
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance,
 Which I have told thee of my father's death.
 I pr'ythee, when thou seest that act a-foot,
 Even with the very comment of thy soul
 Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen;
 And my imaginations are as foul
 As Vulcan's stithy.⁶ Give him heedful note:
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face;
 And, after, we will both our judgements join
 In censure of his seeming.

Hor.

Well, my lord:

If he steal aught, the whilst this play is playing,
 And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play; I must be idle.
 Get you a place.

Danish march. A flourish. Enter King, Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Others.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i'faith; of the camelion's dish: I eat the air, promise-cramm'd: You cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now.⁷ My lord,—you play'd once in the university, you say?⁸
[To POLONIUS.
Pol.]

⁶ *Stithy* is a smith's anvil. JOHNSON.

⁷ A man's words, says the proverb, are his own no longer than he keeps them unspoken. JOHNSON.

⁸ It should seem from the following passage in Vice Chancellor Hatchet's letters to Lord Burghley on June 21, 1580, that the common players were likewise occasionally admitted to perform there: "Whereas it hath pleased your honour to recommend my lorde of Oxenford his players, that they might show their cunning in several plays already practised by 'em before the Queen's majesty"—(denied on account of the pestilence and commencement:) "of late we denied the like to the Right Honourable the Lord of Leicester his servants." FARMER.

Pol. That did I, my lord ; and was accounted a good actor.

Ham. And what did you enact ?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar :⁹ I was kill'd i'the Capitol ;² Brutus kill'd me.

Ham.

The practice of acting Latin plays in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, is very ancient, and continued to near the middle of the last century. They were performed occasionally for the entertainment of princes and other great personages ; and regularly at Christmas, at which time a *Lord of misrule* was appointed at Oxford, to regulate the exhibitions, and a similar officer with the title of *Imperator*, at Cambridge. The most celebrated actors at Cambridge were the students of St. John's and King's colleges : at Oxford, those of Christ-Church. In the hall of that college a Latin comedy called *Marcus Geminus*, and the Latin tragedy of *Progne*, were performed before Queen Elizabeth in the year 1566 ; and in 1564, the Latin tragedy of *Dido* was played before her majesty, when she visited the university of Cambridge. The exhibition was in the body or nave of the chapel of King's college, which was lighted by the royal guards, each of whom bore a staff-torch in his hand. See Peck's *Desider. Cur.* p. 36, n. x. The actors in this piece were all of that college. The author of the tragedy, who in the Latin account of this royal visit, in the Museum, [MSS. Baker, 7037, p. 203,] is said to have been *Regalis Collegii olim socius*, was, I believe, John Rightwise, who was elected a fellow of King's college, in 1507, and according to Anthony Wood, "made the tragedy of *Dido* out of Virgil, and acted the same with the scholars of his school [St. Paul's, of which he was appointed master in 1522,] before Cardinal Wolsey with great applause." In 1583, the same play was performed at Oxford, in Christ-Church hall, before Albertus de Alasco, a Polish prince Palatine, as was William Gager's Latin comedy, entitled *Rivales*. On Elizabeth's second visit to Oxford, in 1592, a few years before the writing of the present play, she was entertained on the 24th and 26th of September, with the representation of the last-mentioned play, and another Latin comedy, called *Bellum Grammaticale*. MALONE.

⁹ A Latin play on the subject of Cæsar's death was performed at Christ-Church in Oxford, in 1582 ; and several years before, a Latin play on the same subject, written by Jacques Grevin, was acted in the college of Beauvais, at Paris. I suspect that there was likewise an English play on the story of Cæsar before the time of Shakspeare. See *Essay on the Order of Shakspeare's Plays*. MALONE.

² This, it is well known, was not the case ; for Cæsar, we are expressly told by Plutarch, was killed in *Pompey's Portico*. But our poet followed the received opinion, and probably the representation of his own time ; in a play on the subject of Cæsar's death, previous to that which he wrote. The notion that Julius Cæsar was killed in the Capitol is as old as the time of Chaucer. MALONE.

Ham. It was a brute part of him,² to kill so capital a calf there.—Be the players ready?

Ros. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.³

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

Pol. O ho! do you mark that? [To the King.

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[Lying down at OPHELIA'S feet.⁴

Oph. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Do you think, I meant country matters?⁵

Oph. I think nothing, my lord.

Ham. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

Oph. What is, my lord?

Ham. Nothing.

Oph. You are merry, my lord.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. O! your only jig-maker.⁶ What should a man do,

² Sir John Harrington in his *Metamorphosis of Ajax*, 1596, has the same quibble: "O brave-minded *Brutus*! but this I must truly say, they were two *brutish parts* both of him and you: one to kill his sons for treason, the other to kill his father in treason." STEEVENS.

³ May it not be read more intelligibly,—they stay upon your pleasure. In *Macbeth* it is:

"Noble Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure."

JOHNSON.

⁴ To lie at the feet of a mistress during any dramatick representation, seems to have been a common act of gallantry. STEEVENS.

⁵ Dr. Johnson, from a casual inadvertence, proposed to read—country manners. The old reading is certainly right. What Shakspeare meant to allude to, must be too obvious to every reader, to require any explanation. MALONE.

⁶ — your only jig-maker.] There may have been some humour in this passage, the force of which is now diminished:

"—— many gentlemen

"Are not, as in the days of understanding,

"Now satisfied without a jig, which since

"They cannot, with their honour, call for after

"The play, they look to be serv'd up in the middle."

Changes, or Love in a Maze, by Shirley, 1632.

In

do, but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of fables.⁷ O heavens! die two months ago,

In *The Hog bath lost his Pearl*, 1614, one of the players comes to solicit a gentleman to write a *jig* for him. A *jig* was not in Shakspeare's time only a dance, but a ludicrous dialogue in metre, and of the lowest kind, like Hamlet's conversation with Ophelia. Many of these jiggs are entered in the books of the Stationers' Company:—"Philips his *Jigg* of the flyppers, 1595. Kempe's *Jigg* of the Kitchen-stuff-woman, 1595." STEEVENS.

A *jig* was not always in the form of a dialogue. Many historical ballads were formerly called *jigs*. MALONE.

A *jig*, though it signified a ludicrous dialogue in metre, yet it also was used for a dance. RITSON.

⁷ The conceit of these words is not taken. They are an ironical apology for his mother's cheerful looks: two months was long enough in conscience to make any dead husband forgotten. But the editors in their nonsensical blunder, have made Hamlet say just the contrary. That the devil and he would both go into mourning, though his mother did not. The true reading is—*Nay, then let the devil wear black, 'fore I'll have a suit of sable.* 'Fore, i. e. before. As much as to say,—Let the devil wear black for me, I'll have none. The Oxford editor despises an emendation so easy, and reads it thus,—*Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of ermine.* And you could expect no less, when such a critick had the dressing of him. But the blunder was a pleasant one. The senseless editors had wrote *sables*, the fur so called, for *sable*, black. And the critick only changed this fur for that; by a like figure, the common people say,—*You rejoice the cockles of my heart, for the muscles of my heart*; an unlucky mistake of one shell-fish for another. WARBURTON.

I know not why our editors should with such implacable anger persecute their predecessors. *Οἱ νεκροὶ μὴ δύνανται*, the dead, it is true, can make no resistance, they may be attacked with great security; but since they can neither feel nor mend, the safety of mauling them seems greater than the pleasure; nor perhaps would it much misbecome us to remember, amidst our triumphs over the *nonsensical* and *senseless*, that we likewise are men; that *debemur morti*, and as Swift observed to Burnet, shall soon be among the dead ourselves.

I cannot find how the common reading is nonsense, nor why Hamlet, when he laid aside his dress of mourning, in a country where it was bitter cold, and the air was nipping and eager, should not have a *suit of fables*. I suppose it is well enough known, that the fur of fables is not black. JOHNSON.

A suit

ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope, a great man's memory may outlive his life half a-year: But, by'r-lady, he must build churches then:⁸ or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse;⁹ whose epitaph is, *For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*²

Trumpets

A *suit of fables* was the richest dress that could be worn in Denmark.

STEEVENS.

Here again is an equivocal. In *Massinger's Old Law*, we have,

“ — A cunning grief,

“ That's only faced with *fables* for a show,

“ But gawdy-hearted. FARMER.

Nay then, says Hamlet, if my father be so long dead as you say, let the devil wear black; as for me, so far from wearing a mourning dress, I'll wear the most costly and magnificent suit that can be procured; *a suit trimmed with fables*.

Our poet furnished Hamlet with a suit of fables on the present occasion, not as I conceive, because such a dress was suited to “a country where it was bitter cold, and the air was nipping and eager,” (as Dr. Johnson supposed,) nor because “a suit of fables was the richest dress that could be worn in *Denmark*,” (as Mr. Steevens has suggested,) of which probably he had no knowledge, but because a suit trimmed with fables was in Shakspeare's time the richest dress worn by men in *England*. We have had again and again occasion to observe, that, wherever his scene might happen to be, the customs of his own country were still in his thoughts.

By the statute of apparel, 24 Henry VIII. c. 13, (article *furres*,) it is ordained, that none under the degree of an *earl* may use *fables*.

Bishop says in his *Blossoms*, 1577, speaking of the extravagance of those times, that a *thousand ducates* were sometimes given for “a *face of fables*.”

That a *suit of fables* was the magnificent dress of our author's time, appears from a passage in Ben Jonson's *Discoveries*: “Would you not laugh to meet a *great counsellor of state*, in a flat cap, with his trunk-hose, and a hobby-horse cloak, and yond haberdasher in a velvet gown trimm'd with *fables*?”

Florio in his Italian Dictionary, 1598, thus explains *zibilini*: “The rich furre called *fables*.”—*Sables* is the skin of the sable Martin.

MALONE.

⁸ Such benefactors to society were sure to be recorded by means of the feast-day on which the patron saints and founders of churches were commemorated in every parish. This custom having been long disused, the names of the builders of sacred edifices are no longer known to the vulgar, and are preserved only in antiquarian memoirs. STEEVENS.

⁹ Amongst the country May-games there was an hobby-horse, which, when the puritannical humour of those times opposed and discredited these

Trumpets sound. The dumb show follows.

Enter a king and a queen, very lovingly; the queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon, comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the king's ears, and exit. The queen returns; finds the king dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with some two or three mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner wooes the queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end, accepts his love. [Exeunt.]

Oph. What means this, my lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching mallecho: it means mischief.³

Oph.

these games, was brought by the poets and ballad-makers as an instance of the ridiculous zeal of the sectaries: from these ballads Hamlet quotes a line or two. WARBURTON.

² In *Love's Labour's Lost*, this line is also introduced. In a small black letter book, entitled, *Plays Confuted*, by Stephen Gosson, I find the *bobby-horse* enumerated in the list of dances. STEEVENS.

³ To *mich* signified, originally, to keep hid and out of sight; and, as such men generally did it for the purposes of *lying in wait*, it then signified to rob. And in this sense Shakspeare uses the noun, a *micher*, when speaking of Prince Henry amongst a gang of robbers. *Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher? Shall the son of England prove a thief?* And in this sense it is used by Chaucer, in his translation of *Le Roman de la Rose*, where he turns the word *lierre*, (which is *larron*, *voleur*,) by *micher*. WARBURTON.

The word *micking* is daily used in the West of England for playing truant, or sculking about in private for some sinister purpose; and *malicho*, inaccurately written for *malbeco*, signifies mischief; so that *micking malicho* is mischief on the watch for opportunity. When Ophelia asks Hamlet—“What means this?” she applies to him for an explanation of what she had not seen in the show; and not, as Dr. Warburton would have it, the purpose for which the show was contrived. Besides, *malbechor* no more signifies a poisoner, than a perpetrator of any other crime.

HENLEY.

A secret and wicked contrivance; a concealed wickedness. To *mich* is a provincial word, and was probably once general, signifying to lie hid, or play the truant. In Norfolk *michers* signify pilferers. The signi-

fication

Oph. Belike, this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow : the players cannot keep counsel ; they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant ?

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll show him : Be not you ashamed to show,⁴ he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

Oph. You are naught, you are naught ; I'll mark the play.

Pro. For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring ?

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter a King and a Queen.

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart⁵ gone round

Neptune's salt wash, and Tellus' orbed ground ;
And thirty dozen moons, with borrow'd sheen,⁶
About the world have times twelve thirties been ;
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er, ere love be done !

But,

fication of *micbing* in the present passage may be ascertained by a passage in Decker's *Wonderful Yeare*, 4to. 1603 : " Those that could shift for a time,—went most bitterly *micbing* and muffled, up and downe, with rue and wormwood stufte into their ears and nostrils." MALONE.

⁴ The conversation of Hamlet with Ophelia, which cannot fail to disgust every modern reader, is probably such as was peculiar to the young and fashionable of the age of Shakspeare, which was, by no means, an age of delicacy. The poet is, however, blameable ; for extravagance of thought, not indecency of expression, is the characteristic of madness, at least of such madness as should be represented on the scene. STEEVENS.

⁵ A chariot was anciently so called. STEEVENS.

⁶ Splendor, lustre. JOHNSON.

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer, and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must :
For women fear too much, even as they love ;
And women's fear and love hold quantity ;
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know ;
And as my love is fix'd, my fear is so.
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear ;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. King. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too ;
My operant powers ⁷ their functions leave to do :
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, belov'd ; and, haply, one as kind
For husband shalt thou—

P. Queen. O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second, but who kill'd the first.

Ham. That's wormwood.

P. Queen. The instances,⁸ that second marriage move,
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love;
A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. King. I do believe, you think what now you speak ;
But, what we do determine, oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory ;
Of violent birth, but poor validity :
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree ;
But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis, that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt :
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose,

⁷ *Operant* is active. Shakspeare gives it in *Timon of Athens* as an epithet to *poison*. STEEVENS.

⁸ The motives. JOHNSON.

9 The performance of a resolution, in which only the *resolver* is interested, is a debt only to himself, which he may therefore remit at pleasure. JOHNSON.

The violence of either grief or joy
 Their own enactures with themselves destroy :²
 Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;
 Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
 This world is not for aye ; nor 'tis not strange,
 That even our loves should with our fortunes change ;
 For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
 Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
 The great man down, you mark, his favourite flies ;
 The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies.
 And hitherto doth love on fortune tend :
 For who not needs, shall never lack a friend ;
 And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
 Directly seasons him his enemy.
 But, orderly to end where I begun,—
 Our wills, and fates, do so contrary run,
 That our devices still are overthrown ;
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own :
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed ;
 But die thy thoughts, when thy first lord is dead.

P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light !
 Sport and repose lock from me, day, and night !
 To desperation turn my trust and hope !
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope !³
 Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,
 Meet what I would have well, and it destroy !
 Both here, and hence, pursue me lasting strife,
 If, once a widow, ever I be wife !

Ham. If she should break it now,— [To OPHÉLIA.

P. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here a
 while ;
 My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
 The tedious day with sleep. [Sleeps.

P. Queen.

² What grief or joy enact or determine in their violence, is revoked in their abatement. *Enactures* is the word in the quarto ; all the modern editions have *enactors*. JOHNSON.

³ May my whole liberty and enjoyment be to live on hermit's fare in a prison. *Anchor* is for *anchoret*. JOHNSON.

This abbreviation of the word *anchoret* is very ancient. STEEVENS.

P. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain! [Exit.

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i'the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista:⁴ you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: But what of that? your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not: Let the gall'd jade wince,⁵ our withers are unwrung.—

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.⁶

Oph. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.⁷

Ham. I could interpret⁸ between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

Oph. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning, to take off my edge.

Oph.

⁴ *Baptista* is, I think, in Italian, the name always of a man.

JOHNSON:

I believe *Battista* is never used singly by the Italians, being uniformly compounded with *Giam* (for *Giovanni*), and meaning, of course, *John the Baptist*. Nothing more was therefore necessary to detect the forgery of Shebbeare's *Letters on the English Nation*, than his ascribing them to *Battista Angeloni*. RITSON.

⁵ This is a proverbial saying. STEEVENS.

⁶ i. e. to the king in the play then represented. The modern editors, following Mr. Theobald, read—*nephew to the duke*,—though they have not followed that editor in substituting *duke and duchess*, for *king and queen*, in the dumb show and subsequent entrance. There is no need of departing from the old copies. MALONE.

⁷ The use to which Shakspeare converted the *chorus*, may be seen in *King Henry V.* HENLEY.

⁸ This refers to the interpreter, who formerly sat on the stage at all motions or puppet-shows, and interpreted to the audience.

Oph. Still better, and worse.⁹

Ham. So you mistake your husbands.²—Begin, murderer; leave thy damnable faces, and begin.

Come :——

——The croaking raven

Doth bellow for revenge.

Luc. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;

Confederate season, else no creature seeing;

Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds³ collected,

With Hecat's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,

Thy natural magick and dire property,

On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears.*]

Ham. He poisons him i'the garden for his estate. His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and written in very choice Italian: You shall see anon, how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The king rises.

Ham. What! frightened with false fire!

Queen. How fares my lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light:—away!

Pol.

⁹ i. e. better in regard to the wit of your *double entendre*, but worse in respect to the grossness of your meaning. STEEVENS.

² Read—So you must take your husbands; that is, for better, for worse. JOHNSON.

Mr. Theobald proposed the same reading in his *Shakspeare Restored*, however he lost it afterwards. STEEVENS.

So you mistake your husbands.] I believe this to be right: the word is sometimes used in this ludicrous manner. “Your true trick, rascal, (says Ursula in *Bartholomew Fair*,) must be to be ever busie, and mistake away the bottles and cans, before they be half drunk off.” FARMER.

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Augurs*: “—— To mistake six torches from the chandry, and give them one.” STEEVENS.

I believe the meaning is—you do amiss for yourselves to take husbands for the worse. You should take them only for the better. TOLLET.

³ The force of the epithet—*midnight*, will be best displayed by a corresponding passage in *Macbeth*:

“Root of hemlock, digg'd i'the dark.” STEEVENS.

Pol. Lights, lights, lights!

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.*]

Ham. Why, let the stricken deep go weep,

The hart ungalled play:

For some must watch, while some must sleep;

Thus runs the world away.—

Would not this, fir, and a forest of feathers,⁴ (if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me,⁵) with two Provencial roses on my razed shoes,⁶ get me a fellowship in a cry of players,⁷ fir?

Hor.

⁴ It appears from Decker's *Guls Hornebooke*, that feathers were much worn on the stage in Shakspeare's time. MALONE.

I believe, since the English stage began, feathers were worn by every company of players that could afford to purchase them. STEEVENS.

⁵ This expression has occurred already in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and I have met with it in several old comedies.

Perhaps the phrase had its rise from some popular story like that of *Ward and Danfiker*, the two famous pirates; an account of whose overthrow was published by A. Barker, 1609; and, in 1612, a play was written on the same subject called *A Christian turn'd Turk*. STEEVENS.

⁶ [Old copies—*provincial*] Why *provincial* roses? Undoubtedly we should read *Provencial*, or (with the French *ç*) *Provençal*. He means roses of *Provence*, a beautiful species of rose, and formerly much cultivated. T. WARTON.

They are still more cultivated than any other flower of the same tribe. STEEVENS.

When shoe-strings were worn, they were covered, where they met in the middle, by a ribband, gathered in the form of a rose. So, in an old song:

“Gil-de-Roy was a bonny boy,

“Had roses tull his shoon.” JOHNSON.

These roses are often mentioned by our ancient dramatick writers.

So, in *The Devil's Law-case*, 1623:

“With over blown roses to hide your gouty ancles.”

Again, in *The Roaring Girl*, 1611: “—— many handsome legs in silk stockings have villainous splay-feet, for all their great roses.”

The reading of the quartos is *raz'd shoes*; that of the folio *rac'd shoes*. *Razed shoes*, may mean *flashed shoes*, i. e. with cuts or openings in them. The poet might have written *raised shoes*, i. e. shoes with *high heels*; such as by adding to the stature, are supposed to increase the dignity of a player. In Stubbs's *Anatomie of Abuses*, 1595, there is a chapter on the *corked shoes* in England, “which (he says) beare them up two inches or more from the ground, &c. some of red, blacke, &c. *razed*, carved, cut, and stitched,” &c.

Mr. Pope reads—*rayed shoes*, i. e. (as interpreted by Dr. Johnson) “shoes braided in lines.” Stowe's *Chronicle*, anno 1353, mentions

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one, I.⁸

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,⁹
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very—peacock.²

Hor.

women's hoods *reyed* or striped. *Raie* is the French word for a stripe. Johnson's *Collection of Ecclesiastical Laws* informs us, under the years 1222 and 1353, that in disobedience of the canon, the clergy's shoes were *chequered* with red and green, exceeding long, and variously pinked.

STEEVENS.

⁷ Allusion to a pack of hounds. WARBURTON.

A *pack* of hounds was once called a *cry* of hounds. STEEVENS.

A troop or company of players. MALONE.

⁸ It should be, I think,

A whole one;—ay,—

For, &c.

The actors in our author's time had not annual salaries as at present. The whole receipts of each theatre were divided into shares, of which the proprietors of the theatre, or *house-keepers* as they were called, had some; and each actor had one or more shares, or part of a share, according to his merit. See *The Account of the Ancient Theatres*. MALONE.

A whole one, I, in familiar language, means no more than—I think myself entitled to a whole one. STEEVENS.

⁹ Hamlet calls Horatio by this name, in allusion to the celebrated friendship between *Damon* and *Pythias*. A play on this subject was written by Richard Edwards, and published in 1582. STEEVENS.

The friendship of *Damon* and *Pythias* is also enlarged upon in a book that was probably very popular in Shakspeare's youth, Sir Thomas Elliot's *Governour*, 1553. MALONE.

² This alludes to a fable of the birds choosing a king; instead of the eagle, a peacock. POPE.

The old copies have it *paiock*, *paicocke*, and *pajocke*. I substitute *pad-dock*, as nearest to the traces of the corrupted reading. I have, as Mr. Pope says, been willing to substitute any thing in the place of his *peacock*. He thinks a fable alluded to, of the birds choosing a king; instead of the eagle, a peacock. I suppose, he must mean the fable of Barlandus, in which it is said, the birds, being weary of their state of anarchy, moved for the setting up of a king; and the *peacock* was elected on account of his gay feathers. But, with submission, in this passage of our Shakspeare, there is not the least mention made of the eagle in antithesis to the peacock; and it must be by a very uncommon figure, that Jove himself stands in the place of his bird. I think, Hamlet is setting his father's and uncle's characters in contrast to each other: and means to say, that by his father's death the state was stripped of a godlike monarch, and that now in his stead reign'd the most despicable poisonous animal that could be; a

mere

Hor. You might have rhymed.

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning,—

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha!—Come, some musick; come, the recorders.—

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike,³—he likes it not, perdy.⁴—

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Come, some musick.

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The king, sir,—

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guil. Is, in his retirement, marvellous distemper'd.

Ham.

mere paddock or toad. *PAD*, *bufo*, *rubeta major*; a toad. This word I take to be of Hamlet's own substituting. The verses, repeated, seem to be from some old ballad; in which, rhyme being necessary, I doubt not but the last verse ran thus:

A very, very—afs. THEOBALD.

A peacock seems proverbial for a fool. Thus, Gascoigne in his *Weeds*:

“A theefe, a cowarde, and a *peacocke* foole.” *FARMER.*

In the last scene of this act, Hamlet, speaking of the King, uses the expression which Theobald would introduce:

“Would from a *paddock*, from a bat, a jib,

“Such dear concernments hide?”

The reading, *peacock*, which I believe to be the true one, was first introduced by Mr. Pope.

Mr. Theobald is unfaithful in his account of the old copies. No copy of authority reads—*paicocke*. The quarto, 1604, has *paiock*; the folio, 1623, *paiocke*.

Shakspeare, I suppose, means, that the king struts about with a false pomp, to which he has no right. See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1568: “*Pavonnegiare*. To jet up and down, fondly gazing upon himself, as a peacock doth.” *MALONE.*

³ Hamlet was going on to draw the consequence, when the courtiers entered. *JOHNSON.*

⁴ *Perdy* is a corruption of *par Dieu*, and is not uncommon in the old plays. *STEEVENS.*

Ham. With drink, fir?⁵

Guil. No, my lord, with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer, to signify this to the doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation, would, perhaps, plunge him into more choler.

Guil. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, fir:—pronounce.

Guil. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon, and my return, shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: But, fir, such answer as I can make, you shall command: or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: My mother, you say, —

Ros. Then thus she says; Your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother!— But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed,

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade⁶ with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. And do still, by these pickers and stealers.⁷

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do,

⁵ Hamlet takes particular care that his uncle's love of drink shall not be forgotten. JOHNSON.

⁶ Further business; further dealing. JOHNSON.

⁷ By these hands. JOHNSON.

By these hands, says Dr. Johnson; and rightly. But the phrase is taken from our church catechism, where the catechumen, in his duty to his neighbour, is taught to keep his hands from *picking and stealing*.

do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir, but, *While the grass grows*, —the proverb is something musty.⁸

*Enter the Players, with Recorders.*⁹

O, the recorders:—let me see one.—To withdraw with you:²—Why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.³

Ham.

⁸ The remainder of this old proverb is preserved in Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578:

“Whylst grasse doth growe, oft sterues the feely steede.”

Hamlet means to intimate, that whilst he is waiting for the succession to the throne of Denmark, he may himself be taken off by death.

MALONE.

⁹ i. e. a kind of large flute.

To record anciently signified to sing or modulate. STEEVENS.

² To withdraw with you:] These last words have no meaning, as they stand; yet none of the editors have attempted to amend them. They were probably spoken to the players, whom Hamlet wished to get rid of:—I therefore should suppose that we ought to read, “so, withdraw you;” or, “so withdraw, will you?” M. MASON.

Here Mr. Malone adds the following stage direction:—[*Taking Guildenstern aside.*] But the foregoing obscure words may refer to some gesture which Guildenstern had used, and which, at first was interpreted by Hamlet into a signal for him to attend the speaker into another room. “To withdraw with you?” (says he) Is that your meaning? But finding his friends continue to move mysteriously about him, he adds, with some resentment, a question more easily intelligible. STEEVENS.

³ i. e. if my duty to the king makes me press you a little, my love to you makes me still more importunate. If that makes me bold, this makes me even unmannerly. WARBURTON.

I believe we should read—my love is not unmannerly. My conception of this passage is, that, in consequence of Hamlet's moving to take the recorder, Guildenstern also shifts his ground, in order to place himself beneath the prince in his new position. This Hamlet ludicrously calls “going about to recover the wind,” &c. and Guildenstern may answer properly

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages³ with your fingers and thumb,⁴ give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent musick. Look you, these are the stops.⁵

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me? You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much musick, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak.

'Sblood, perly enough, I think, and like a courtier; "if my duty to the king makes me too bold in pressing you upon a disagreeable subject, my love to you will make me not unmannerly, in shewing you all possible marks of respect and attention. TYRWHITT.

³ The holes of a flute. JOHNSON.

⁴ The first quarto reads—*with your fingers and the umber*. This may probably be the ancient name for that piece of moveable brass at the end of a flute which is either raised or depressed by the finger. The word *umber* is used by Stowe the chronicler, who, describing a single combat between two knights—says, "he brast up his *umber* three times." Here, the *umber* means the visor of the helmet. STEEVENS.

If a recorder had a brass key like the *German Flute*, we are to follow the reading of the quarto; for then the thumb is not concerned in the government of the ventages or stops. If a recorder was like a *tabourer's pipe*, which has no brass key, but has a stop for the thumb, we are to read—*Govern these ventages with your finger and thumb*. In Cotgrave's Dictionary, *ombre*, *ombraire*, *ombriere*, and *ombrelle*, are all from the Latin *umbra*, and signify a shadow, an umbrella, or any thing that shades or hides the face from the sun; and hence they may have been applied to any thing that hides or covers another; as for example, they may have been applied to the brass key that covers the hole in the German flute. So, Spenser used *umbriere* for the visor of the helmet, as Rous's *History of the Kings of England* uses *umbrella* in the same sense. TOLLET.

⁵ The sounds formed by occasionally stopping the holes, while the instrument is played upon. MALONE.

'Sblood, do you think, I am easier to be play'd on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS.

God blefs you, fir!

Pol. My lord, the queen would ſpeak with you, and preſently.

Ham. Do you ſee yonder cloud, that's almoſt in ſhape of a camel?

Pol. By the maſs, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks, it is like a weaſel.⁶

Pol. It is back'd like a weaſel.

Ham. Or, like a whale?

Pol.

⁶ This paſſage has been printed in modern editions thus:

Ham. Methinks, it is like an ouzle, &c.

Pol. It is black like an ouzle.

The firſt folio reads,—*It is like a weazel.*

Pol. *It is back'd like a weazel*—: and what occaſion for alteration there was, I cannot diſcover. The *weaſel* is remarkable for the length of its *back*; but though I believe a *black weaſel* is not eaſy to be found, yet it is as likely that the cloud ſhould reſemble a *weaſel* in ſhape, as an *ouzele* (i. e. black-bird) in colour.

Mr. Tollet obſerves, that we might read—“it is *beck'd* like a weaſel,” i. e. weaſel-snouted. So, in *Holinſhed's Deſcription of England*, p. 172: “if he be *wefell-becked*.” Quarles uſes this term of reproach in his *Virgin Widow*: “Go you *weazel-snouted*, addle-pated,” &c. Mr. Tollet adds, that Milton in his *Lycidas*, calls a promontory *beaked*, i. e. prominent like the *beak* of a bird, or a ſhip. STEEVENS.

Ham. Methinks it is like a *weazel*.

Pol. *It is back'd like a weazel.*] Thus the quarto, 1604, and the folio. In a more modern quarto, that of 1611, *back'd* the original reading, was corrupted into *black*.

Perhaps in the original edition the words *camel* and *weazel* were ſhuffled out of their places. The poet might have intended the dialogue to proceed thus:

“*Ham.* Do you ſee yonder cloud, that's almoſt in the ſhape of a *weazel*?”

“*Pol.* By the maſs, and 'tis like a weazel, indeed.

“*Ham.* Methinks it is like a *camel*.

“*Pol.* It is back'd like a *camel*.

The protuberant back of a camel ſeems more to reſemble a cloud than the back of a weazel does. MALONE.

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by and by.—They fool me to the top of my bent.⁷—I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so.

[*Exit* POLONIUS,

Ham. By and by is easily said.—Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt* ROS. GUIL. HOR. &c.

'Tis now the very witching time of night;
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: Now could I drink hot blood,
And do such business as the bitter⁸ day
Would quake to look on. Soft; now to my mother.—
O, heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:
Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
I will speak daggers to her,⁹ but use none;
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites:
How in my words soever she be shent,²
To give them seals³ never, my soul, consent! [*Exit.*

⁷ They compel me to play the fool, till I can endure it no longer.

JOHNSON.

Perhaps a term in archery: i. e. as far as the bow will admit of being bent without breaking. DOUCE.

⁸ The expression *bitter business* is still in use, and though at present a vulgar phrase, might not have been such in the age of Shakspeare. The *bitter* day is the day rendered hateful or *bitter* by the commission of some act of mischief.

Watts, in his *Logick*, says, “*Bitter* is an equivocal word; there is *bitter* wormwood, there are *bitter* words, there are *bitter* enemies, and a *bitter* cold morning.” It is, in short, any thing unpleasing or hurtful.

STEEVENS.

⁹ A similar expression occurs in *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606: “They are pestilent fellows, they speak nothing but *bodkins*.” It has been already observed, that a *bodkin* anciently signified a *short dagger*.

STEEVENS.

² To *shent*, is to reprove harshly, to treat with rough language.

STEEVENS.

Shent seems to mean something more than reproof, by the following passage from *The Mirror for Magistrates*: Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, is the speaker, and he relates his having betrayed the Duke of Gloucester and his confederates to the King, “for which (says he) they were all tane and shent.”

Hamlet surely means, “however my mother may be hurt, wounded, or punish’d, by my words, let me never consent” &c. HENDERSON.

³ i. e. put them in execution. WARBURTON.

SCENE

S C E N E III.

*A Room in the same.**Enter King, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

King. I like him not; nor stands it safe with us,
To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you;
I your commission will forthwith despatch,
And he to England shall along with you:
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so near us, as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunes.⁴

Guil. We will ourselves provide:
Most holy and religious fear it is,
To keep those many many bodies safe,
That live, and feed, upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound,
With all the strength and armour of the mind,
To keep itself from 'noyance; but much more

That

⁴ The folio—reads *lunacies*;—and the old quartos—read *brows*.

I take *brows* to be, properly read, *frows*, which, I think, is a provincial word for *perverse humours*; which being, I suppose, not understood, was changed to *lunacies*. But of this I am not confident.

JOHNSON.

The two readings of *brows* and *lunes*—when taken in connection with the passages referred to by Mr. Steevens, in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, plainly figure forth the image under which the King apprehended danger from Hamlet:—viz. that of a bull, which, in his frenzy, might not only gore, but push him from his throne.—“The hazard that hourly grows out of his *BROWS*” (according to the quartos) corresponds to “*the shoots from the ROUGH PASH,*” [that is *the TUFTED PROTUBERANCE on the head of a bull, from whence his horns spring*] alluded to in *The Winter's Tale*; whilst the imputation of impending danger to “*his LUNES*” (according to the other reading) answers as obviously to the jealous fury of the husband that thinks he has detected the infidelity of his wife. Thus, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: “Why woman, your husband is in his old *lunes*—he so takes on yonder with my husband; so rails against all married mankind; so curses all Eve's daughters, and so buffets himself on the *forehead*, crying peer out! peer out! that any *madness*, I ever yet beheld, seem'd but *tameness*, civility, and patience, to this distemper he is now in.” HENLEY.

That spirit, upon whose weal depend and rest
 The lives of many. The cease of majesty
 Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw
 What's near it, with it: it is a massy wheel,
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
 Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,
 Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
 For we will fetters put upon this fear,
 Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. Guil. We will haste us.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet;
 Behind the arras⁴ I'll convey myself,
 To hear the process; I'll warrant, she'll tax him home:
 And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
 'Tis meet, that some more audience, than a mother,
 Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
 The speech, of vantage.⁵ Fare you well, my liege:
 I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
 And tell you what I know.

King. Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
 It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
 A brother's murder!—Pray can I not,
 Though inclination be as sharp as will;⁶

My

⁴ The arras-hangings in Shakspeare's time, were hung at such a distance from the walls, that a person might easily stand behind them unperceived. MALONE.

⁵ By some opportunity of secret observation. WARBURTON.

⁶ Dr. Warburton would read,

Though inclination be as sharp as th' ill.

The old reading is—as sharp as will. STEEVENS.

I have

My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
 And, like a man to double business bound,
 I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
 And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,
 To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,
 But to confront the visage of offence?
 And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force,—
 To be forestalled, ere we come to fall,
 Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up;
 My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
 Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!—
 That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
 May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?⁷
 In the corrupted currents of this world,
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
 And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?

Try

I have followed the easier emendation of Mr. Theobald, received by Sir T. Hanmer: i. e. as *'twill*. JOHNSON.

Will is command, direction. Thus, *Ecclesiasticus*, xliii. 16: “— and at his *will* the south wind bloweth.” The King says, his mind is in too great confusion to pray, even though his *inclination* were as strong as the *command* which requires that duty. STEEVENS.

What the King means to say, is, “That though he was not only *willing* to pray, but strongly *inclined* to it, yet his intention was defeated by his guilt. M. MASON.

⁷ He that does not amend what can be amended, *retains his offence*. The King kept the crown from the right heir. JOHNSON.

A similar passage occurs in *Philaster*, where the King, who had usurped the crown of Sicily, and is praying to heaven for forgiveness, says,

“ ——— But how can I—

“ Look to be heard of gods, that must be just,

“ Praying upon the ground I hold my wrong,” M. MASON.

Try what repentance can : What can it not ?
 Yet what can it, when one can not repent ?⁸
 O wretched state ! O bosom, black as death !
 O limed soul ;⁹ that, struggling to be free,
 Art more engag'd ! Help, angels, make assay !
 Bow, stubborn knees ! and, heart, with strings of steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe ;
 All may be well ! [Retires, and kneels.]

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying ;
 And now I'll do't ;—And so he goes to heaven :
 And so am I reveng'd ? That would be scann'd :²
 A villain kills my father ; and, for that,
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send
 To heaven.

Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
 He took my father grossly, full of bread ;³
 With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May ;
 And, how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven ?⁴
 But, in our circumstance and course of thought,
 'Tis heavy with him : And am I then reveng'd,
 To take him in the purging of his soul,
 When he is fit and season'd for his passage ?
 No.

Up, sword ; and know thou a more horrid hent :⁵

When

⁸ *What can repentance do for a man that cannot be penitent, for a man who has only part of penitence, distress of conscience, without the other part, resolution of amendment ?* JOHNSON.

⁹ This alludes to *bird-lime*. STEEVENS.

² i. e. that should be considered, estimated. STEEVENS.

³ The uncommon expression, *full of bread*, our poet borrowed from the sacred writings : “ Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom ; pride, *fullness of bread*, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.” *Ezekiel*, xvi. 49. MALONE.

⁴ As it appears from the Ghost's own relation that he was in *purgatory*, Hamlet's doubt could only be how long he had to continue there.

RITSON.

⁵ To *hent* is used by Shakspeare for, to *seize*, to *catch*, to *lay hold on*. *Hent* is, therefore, *bold*, or *seizure*. *Lay hold on him, sword, at a more horrid time*. JOHNSON.

When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;
 Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed;
 At gaming, swearing; or about some act
 That has no relish of salvation in't:
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven;
 And that his soul may be as damn'd, and black,
 As hell, whereto it goes.⁶ My mother stays:
 This phyfick but prolongs thy sickly days.

[Exit.]

The King rises, and advances.

King. My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
 Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go.

[Exit.]

S C E N E IV.

Another Room in the same.

Enter Queen and POLONIUS.

Pol. He will come straight. Look, you lay home to him:
 Tell

⁶ This speech, in which Hamlet, represented as a virtuous character, is not content with taking blood for blood, but contrives damnation for the man that he would punish, is too horrible to be read or to be uttered.

JOHNSON.

This speech of Hamlet's, as Johnson observes, is horrible indeed; yet some moral may be extracted from it, as all his subsequent calamities were owing to this savage refinement of revenge. M. MASON.

That a sentiment so infernal should have met with imitators, may excite surprize; and yet the same fiend-like disposition is shown by Lodowick, in Webster's *White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona*, 1612:

“ ——— to have poison'd

“ The handle of his racket. O, that, that!—

“ That while he had been bandying at tennis,

“ He might have sworn himself to hell, and struck

“ His soul into the hazard!” STEEVENS.

I think it not improbable, that when Shakspeare put this horrid sentiment into the mouth of Hamlet, he might have recollected the following story: “ One of these monsters meeting his enemy unarmed, threatned to kill him, if he denied not God, his power, and essential properties, viz. his mercy, suffrance, &c. the which, when the other, desiring life, pronounced with great horror, kneeling upon his knees; the bravo cried out, *nowe will I kill thy body and soule*, and at that instant thrust him through with his rapier.” *Brief Discourse of the Spanish State, with a Dialogue annexed intitled Philobasilis*, 4to. 1590, p. 24. REED.

Tell him, his pranks have been too broad to bear with;
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.⁷
Pray you, be round with him.

Queen. I'll warrant you;
Fear me not:—withdraw, I hear him coming.
[*POLONIUS hides himself.*]

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now, mother; what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet?

Ham. What's the matter now?

Queen. Have you forgot me?

Ham. No, by the rood, not so:

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;

And,—'would it were not so!—you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

Ham. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not
budge;

You go not, till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!

Pol. [*Behind*] What, ho! help!

Ham. How now! a rat?⁸ [*Draws.*]

Dead, for a ducat, dead.

[*HAMLET makes a pass through the arras.*
Pol. [*Behind.*] O, I am slain. [*Falls, and dies.*]

Queen. O me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not:

Is it the king?

[*Lifts up the arras, and draws forth POLONIUS.*
Queen.]

⁷ I'll silence me even here, is, I'll use no more words. JOHNSON.

⁸ This (as Dr. Farmer has observed) is an expression borrowed from
The History of Hamlet, a translation from the French of Belleforest
STEEVENS.

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Ham. A bloody deed;—almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king!⁹

Ham.

⁹ This exclamation may be considered as some hint that the queen had no hand in the murder of Hamlet's father. STEEVENS.

It has been doubted whether Shakspeare intended to represent the queen as accessory to the murder of her husband. The surprize she here expresses at the charge seems to tend to her exculpation. Where the variation is not particularly marked, we may presume, I think, that the poet intended to tell his story as it had been told before. The following extract therefore from *The History of Hamlet*, bl. l. relative to this point, will probably not be unacceptable to the reader: “Fengon [the king in the present play] boldened and encouraged by such impunitie, durst venture to couple himself in marriage with her, whom he used as his concubine during good Horvendille's life; in that sort spotting his name with a double vice, incestuous adulterie, and paracide murther.—This adulterer and infamous murtherer slandered his dead brother, that he would have slaine his wife, and that hee by chance finding him on the point ready to do it, in defense of the lady, had slaine him.—The unfortunate and wicked woman that had received the honour to be the wife of one of the valiantest and wisest princes in the North, imbased herself in such vile sort as to falsifie her faith unto him, and, which is worse, to marrie him that had bin the tyrannous murtherer of her lawful husband; *which made diverse men think that she had been the causer of the murther*, thereby to live in her adulterie without controle.” *Hist. of Hamb.* fig. C I. 2.

In the conference however with her son, on which the present sense is founded, she strongly asserts her innocence with respect to this fact:

“I know well, my sonne, that I have done thee great wrong in marrying with Fengon, the cruel tyrant and murtherer of thy father, and my loyal spouse; but when thou shalt consider the small means of resistance, and the treason of the palace, with the little cause of confidence we are to expect, or hope for, of the courtiers, all wrought to his will; as also the power he made ready if I should have refused to like him; thou wouldst rather excuse, than accuse me of lasciviousness or inconstancy, much less offer me that wrong to *suspect that ever thy mother Geruth once consented to the death and murther of her husband*: swearing unto thee by the majestie of the gods, that if it had layne in me to have resisted the tyrant, although it had beene with the losse of my blood, yea and of my life, I would surely have saved the life of my lord and husband.” *Ibid.* fig. D 4.

It is observable, that in the drama neither the king or queen make so good a defence. Shakspeare wished to render them as odious as he could, and therefore has not in any part of the play furnished them with even the semblance of an excuse for their conduct.

Though

Ham. Ay, lady, 'twas my word.—
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell! [*To POLONIUS.*
I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune:

Thou

Though the inference already mentioned may be drawn from the surprise which our poet has here made the queen express at being charged with the murder of her husband, it is observable that when the player-queen in the preceding scene says,

“In second husband let me be accurst!

“None wed the second, *but who kill'd the first,*”

he has made Hamlet exclaim—“*that's wormwood.*” The prince, therefore, both from the expression and the words addressed to his mother in the present scene, must be supposed to think her guilty.—Perhaps after all this investigation, the truth is, that Shakspeare himself meant to leave the matter in doubt. MALONE.

I know not in what part of this tragedy the king and queen could have been expected to enter into a vindication of their mutual conduct. The former indeed is rendered contemptible as well as guilty; but for the latter our poet seems to have felt all that tenderness which the Ghost recommends to the imitation of her son. STEEVENS.

Had Shakspeare thought fit to have introduced the topics I have suggested, can there be a doubt concerning his ability to introduce them? The king's justification, if to justify him had been the poet's object, (which it certainly was not,) might have been made in a soliloquy; the queen's, in the present interview with her son. MALONE.

It might not unappositely be observed, that every new commentator, like Sir T. Hanmer's Othello, must often “*make the meat he feeds on.*” Some slight objection to every opinion already offered, may be found; and, if in doubtful cases we are to presume that “the poet tells his stories as they have been told before,” we must put new constructions on many of his scenes, as well as new comments on their verbal obscurities.

For instance—touching the manner in which Hamlet disposed of Polonius's body. The black-letter history tells us he “cut it in pieces, which he caused to be boiled, and then cast it into an open vault or privie.” Are we to conclude therefore that he did so in the play before us, because our author has left the matter doubtful? Hamlet is only made to tell us that this dead counsellor was “safely stowed.” He afterwards adds “—you shall *nose* him” &c.; all which might have been the case, had the direction of the aforesaid history been exactly followed. In this transaction then (which I call a doubtful one, because the remains of Polonius might have been rescued from the *ferica*, and afterwards have received their “hugger-mugger” funeral) am I at liberty to suppose he had had the fate of Heliogabalus, *in cloacam missus*?

That the Queen (who may still be regarded as innocent of murder) might have offered some apology for her “over-hasty marriage,” can easily be supposed; but Mr. Malone has not suggested what defence could have been set up by the royal fratricide. My acute predecessor, as well

Thou find'st, to be too busy, is some danger.—
 Leave wringing of your hands: Peace; sit you down,
 And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,
 If it be made of penetrable stuff;
 If damned custom have not braz'd it so,
 That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue
 In noise so rude against me?

Ham. Such an act,
 That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
 Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose² From

as the novellist, must have been aware that though female weakness, and an offence against the forms of the world, will admit of extenuation, such guilt as that of the usurper, could not have been palliated by the dramatick art of Shakspeare; even if the father of Hamlet had been represented as a wicked instead of a virtuous character. STEEVENS.

² Alluding to the custom of wearing roses on the side of the face.

WARBURTON.

I believe Dr. Warburton is mistaken; for it must be allowed that there is a material difference between an ornament worn on the *forehead*, and one exhibited on *the side of the face*. Some have understood these words to be only a metaphorical enlargement of the sentiment contained in the preceding line:

“ — blurs the grace and *blush* of modesty:”

but as the *forehead* is no proper situation for a *blush* to be displayed in, we may have recourse to another explanation.

It was once the custom for those who were betrothed, to wear some flower as an external and conspicuous mark of their mutual engagement.

STEEVENS.

I believe, by the *rose* was only meant the *roseate hue*. The forehead certainly appears to us an odd place for the hue of innocence to dwell on, but Shakspeare might place it there with as much propriety as a *smile*. In *Troilus and Cressida* we find these lines:

“ So rich advantage of a promis'd glory,

“ As *smiles* upon the *forehead* of this action.”

That part of the forehead which is situated between the eye-brows, seems to have been considered by our poet as the seat of innocence and modesty. So, in a subsequent scene:

“ — brands the harlot,

“ Even here, between the *chaste* unsmirched brow

“ Of my true mother.” MALONE.

In the foregoing quotation from *Troilus and Cressida*, I understand that the *forehead* is *smiled upon by advantage*, and not that the *forehead* is itself the *smiler*. Thus, says Laertes in the play before us:

“ Occasion *smiles upon* a second leave.”

But it is not the *leave* that *smiles*, but *occasion* that *smiles upon it*.

From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
 And fets a blister there; makes marriage vows
 As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed,
 As from the body of contraction³ plucks
 The very soul; and sweet religion makes
 A rhapsody of words: Heaven's face doth glow;
 Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
 With tristful visage, as against the doom,
 Is thought-sick at the act.⁴

Queen.

In the subsequent passage, our author had no choice; for having alluded to that part of the face which was anciently branded with a mark of shame, he was compelled to place his token of innocence in a corresponding situation. STEEVENS.

³ *Contraction for marriage contract.* WARBURTON.

⁴ If any sense can be found here, it is this. The sun glows [and does it not always?] and the very solid mass of earth has a tristful visage, and is thought-sick. All this is sad stuff. The old quarto reads much nearer to the poet's sense:

*Heaven's face does glow,
 O'er this solidity and compound mass,
 With heated visage, as against the doom,
 Is thought-sick at the act.*

From whence it appears, that Shakspeare wrote,

*Heaven's face doth glow,
 O'er this solidity and compound mass,
 With tristful visage; and, as 'gainst the doom,
 Is thought-sick at the act.*

This makes a fine sense, and to this effect. The sun looks upon our globe, the scene of this murder, with an angry and mournful countenance, half hid in eclipse, as at the day of doom. WARBURTON.

The word *beated*, though it agrees well enough with *glow*, is, I think, not so striking as *tristful*, which was, I suppose, chosen at the revival. I believe the whole passage now stands as the author gave it. Dr. Warburton's reading restores two improprieties, which Shakspeare, by his alteration, had removed. In the first, and in the new reading, *Heaven's face glows with tristful visage*; and, *Heaven's face is thought-sick*. To the common reading there is no just objection. JOHNSON.

I am strongly inclined to think that the reading of the quarto, 1604, is the true one. In Shakspeare's licentious diction, the meaning may be,—The face of heaven doth glow with heated visage over the earth: and *heaven*, as against the day of judgement, is thought-sick at the act.

Had not our poet St. Luke's description of the last day in his thoughts? —“And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the

Queen.

Ah me, what act,

That roars so loud,⁵ and thunders in the index?⁶

Ham. Look here, upon this picture, and on this;⁷

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.

See, what a grace was seated on this brow:

Hyperion's curls;⁸ the front of Jove himself;

An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;

A station like the herald Mercury,⁹

New-

the waves roaring: men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking on those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken," &c. MALONE.

⁵ The meaning is,—*What is this act, of which the discovery, or mention, cannot be made, but with this violence of clamour?* JOHNSON.

⁶ Mr. Edwards observes, that the *indexes* of many old books were at that time inserted at the beginning, instead of the end, as is now the custom. This observation I have often seen confirmed.

So, in *Otello*, Act II. sc. vii: "— an *index* and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts." STEEVENS.

Bullokar in his *Expositor*, 8vo. 1616, defines an *Index* by "A table in a booke." The *table* was almost always *prefixed* to the books of our poet's age. *Indexes*, in the sense in which we now understand the word, were very uncommon. MALONE.

⁷ It is evident from the following words,

"A station, like the herald Mercury," &c.

that these pictures, which are introduced as miniatures on the stage, were meant for whole lengths, being part of the furniture of the Queen's closet.

Hamlet, who, in a former scene, has censured those who gave "forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece" for his uncle's "picture in little," would hardly have condescended to carry such a thing in his pocket.

STEEVENS.

The introduction of miniatures in this place appears to be a modern innovation. A print prefixed to Rowe's edition of *Hamlet*, published in 1709, proves this. There, the two royal portraits are exhibited as half-lengths, hanging in the Queen's closet; and either thus, or as whole-lengths, they probably were exhibited from the time of the original performance of this tragedy to the death of Betterton. To half-lengths, however, the same objection lies, as to miniatures. MALONE.

We may also learn, that from this print the trick of kicking the chair down on the appearance of the Ghost, was adopted by modern Hamlets from the practice of their predecessors. STEEVENS.

⁸ It is observable that *Hyperion* is used by Spenser with the same error in quantity. FARMER.

⁹ *Station* in this instance does not mean *the spot where any one is placed*, but *the act of standing*. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III. sc. iii.

"Her motion and her station are as one."

On

New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
 A combination, and a form, indeed,
 Where every god did seem to set his seal,
 To give the world assurance of a man:
 This was your husband.—Look you now, what follows:
 Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
 Blasting his wholesome brother.² Have you eyes?
 Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
 And batten³ on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
 You cannot call it, love: for, at your age,
 The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
 And waits upon the judgement; And what judgement
 Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,
 Else, could you not have motion:⁴ But, sure, that sense
 Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err;
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
 But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,
 To serve in such a difference. What devil was't,

That

On turning to Mr. Theobald's first edition, I find that he had made the same remark, and supported it by the same instance. The observation is necessary, for otherwise the compliment designed to the attitude of the king, would be bestowed on the place where Mercury is represented as standing. STEEVENS.

² This alludes to *Pharaoh's Dream*, in the 41st chapter of *Genesis*.

STEEVENS.

³ i. e. to grow fat.

Bat is an ancient word for *increase*. Hence the adjective *batful*, so often used by Drayton in his *Polyolbion*. STEEVENS.

⁴ But from what philosophy our editors learnt this, I cannot tell. Since *motion* depends so little upon *sense*, that the greatest part of *motion* in the universe, is amongst bodies devoid of *sense*. We should read:

Else, could you not have notion,

i. e. intellect, reason, &c. This alludes to the famous peripatetic principle of *Nil fit in intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu*. And how fond our author was of applying, and alluding to, the principles of this philosophy, we have given several instances. The principle in particular has been since taken for the foundation of one of the noblest works that these latter ages have produced. WARBURTON.

The whole passage is wanting in the folio; and which soever of the readings be the true one, the poet was not indebted to this boasted philosophy for his choice. STEEVENS.

Sense is sometimes used by Shakspeare for sensation or *sensual appetite*; as *motion* is for the effect produced by the impulse of nature. Such, I think, is the signification of these words here. MALONE.

That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind;⁵
 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling fans all,
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense
 Could not so mope.⁶

O shame? where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
 If thou canst mutine⁷ in a matron's bones,
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
 And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame,
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge;
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
 And reason panders will.⁸

Queen.

O Hamlet, speak no more:

Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;
 And there I see such black and grained⁹ spots,
 As will not leave² their tinct.

Ham.

Nay, but to live

In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed;³

Stew'd

⁵ This is, I suppose, the same as *blindman's-buff*. STEEVENS.

⁶ i. e. could not exhibit such marks of stupidity. STEEVENS.

⁷ To *mutine* for which the modern editors have substituted *mutiny*, was the ancient term, signifying to rise in *mutiny*. MALONE.

⁸ So, the folio, I think rightly; but the reading of the quarto is defensible:

— *reason pardons will*. JOHNSON.

Panders was certainly Shakspeare's word. MALONE.

⁹ Died in grain. JOHNSON.

I am not quite certain that the epithet—*grained* is justly interpreted. Our author employs the same adjective in *The Comedy of Errors*:

“ Though now this *grained* face of mine be hid,” &c.

and in this instance the allusion is most certainly to the furrows in the grain of wood.

Shakspeare might therefore design the Queen to say, that her spots of guilt were not merely superficial, but indented — A passage, however, in *Twelfth Night*, will sufficiently authorize Dr. Johnson's explanation:

“ 'Tis in grain, sir, 'twill endure wind and weather.” STEEVENS.

² To *leave* is to part with, give up, resign. STEEVENS.

³ Thus the folio; i. e. *greasy* bed. JOHNSON.

Thus also the quarto, 1604. Beaumont and Fletcher use the word *inseamed* in the same sense, in the third of their *Four Plays in One*:

“ His lachery *inseam'd* upon him.”

In *The Book of Haukyng*, &c. bl. l. no date, we are told that “ *Ensayme* of a hauke is the grece.”

Stew'd in corruption; honeying, and making love
Over the nasty stye;—

Queen. O, speak to me no more;
These words like daggers enter in mine ears;
No more, sweet Hamlet.

Ham. A murderer, and a villain:
A slave, that is not twentieth part the tythe
Of your precedent lord:—a vice of kings:³
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule;
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,⁴
And put it in his pocket!

Queen. No more.

Enter Ghost.

Ham. A king
Of shreds and patches:⁵—
Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards!—What would your gracious figure?

Queen. Alas, he's mad.

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion,⁶ lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

Ghost. Do not forget: This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look! amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul;

Conceit

In some places it means hogs' lard, in others, the grease or oil with which clothiers besmear their wool to make it draw out in spinning.

Incestuous is the reading of the quarto, 1611. STEEVENS.

In the West of England, the *inside fat* of a goose, when dissolved by heat, is called its *seam*. HENLEY.

³ A low mimick of kings. The vice is the fool of a farce; from whence the modern *punch* is descended. JOHNSON.

⁴ This is said not unmeaningly, but to show, that the usurper came not to the crown by any glorious villainy that carried danger with it, but by the low cowardly theft of a common pilferer. WARBURTON.

⁵ This is said, pursuing the idea of the *vice of kings*. The *vice* was dressed as a fool, in a coat of party-coloured patches. JOHNSON.

⁶ That, having suffered *time to slip*, and *passion to cool*, lets go, &c. JOHNSON.

Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works;⁷

Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you?

That you do bend your eye on vacancy,

And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?

Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;

And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,

Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,⁸

Starts up, and stands on end. O gentle son,

Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper

Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

Ham. On him! on him!—Look you, how pale he glares!

His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,

Would make them capable.⁹—Do not look upon me;

Left, with this piteous action, you convert

My stern effects:² then what I have to do

Will want true colour; tears, perchance, for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Queen. Nothing at all; yet all, that is, I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen. No, nothing, but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!

My father, in his habit³ as he liv'd!

Look,

⁷ *Conceit* for *imagination*.

⁸ The hairs are excrementitious, that is, without life or sensation; yet those very hairs, as if they had life, start up, &c. POPE.

Not only the hair of animals having neither life nor sensation was called an *excrement*, but the feathers of birds had the same appellation. Thus, in Walton's *Complete Angler*, P. I. c. i. p. 9, edit. 1766: "I will not undertake to mention the several kinds of fowl by which this is done, and his curious palate pleased by day; and which, with their very *excrements*, afford him a soft lodging at night. WHALLEY.

⁹ *Capable* here signifies *intelligent*; endued with *understanding*.

We yet use *capacity* in this sense. MALONE.

² *Effects* for actions; deeds *effected*. MALONE.

³ If the poet means by this expression, that his father appeared in his own *familiar habit*, he has either forgot that he had originally introduced him in *armour*, or must have meant to vary his dress at this his last appearance.

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[Exit Ghost.]

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain:
This bodiless creation ecstasy⁴
Is very cunning in.

Ham. Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music: It is not madness,
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness, speaks:
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place;
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,⁵
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue &
For, in the fatness of these purfy times,
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg;
Yea, curb⁶ and woo, for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet! thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Ham. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this;⁷

That

pearance. The difficulty might perhaps be a little obviated by pointing the line thus:

My father—in his habit—as he liv'd! STEEVENS.

A man's armour, who is used to wear it, may be called his *habit*, as well as any other kind of clothing. *As he lived*, probably means—"as if he were alive—as if he lived." M. MASON.

⁴ *Ecstasy* in this place, and many others, means a temporary alienation of mind, a fit. STEEVENS.

⁵ Do not, by any new indulgence, heighten your former offences.

JOHNSON.

⁶ That is, *bend* and *truckle*. Fr. *courber*. STEEVENS.

⁷ This passage is left out in the two elder folios: it is certainly corrupt,

That to the use of actions fair and good
 He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
 That aptly is put on: Refrain to-night;
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness
 To the next abstinence: the next more easy:
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
 And either curb the devil, or throw him out
 With wondrous potency. Once more, good night!
 And when you are desirous to be blest'd,
 I'll blessing beg of you.—For this same lord,

[Pointing to POLONIUS.]

I do repent; But heaven hath pleas'd it so,—
 To punish me with this, and this with me,⁸
 That I must be their scourge and minister.
 I will bestow him, and will answer well
 The death I gave him. So, again, good night!—
 I must be cruel, only to be kind:
 Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.—
 But one word more, good lady.

Queen.

What shall I do?

Ham.

rupt, and the players did the discreet part to stifle what they did not understand. *Habit's devil* certainly arose from some conceited tamperer with the text, who thought it was necessary, in contrast to *angel*. The emendation in my text I owe to the sagacity of Dr. Thirlby:

*That monster custom, who all sense doth eat
 Of habit's evil, is angel, &c.* THEOBALD.

I think Thirlby's conjecture wrong, though the succeeding editors have followed it; *angel* and *devil* are evidently opposed. JOHNSON.

I incline to think with Dr. Thirlby; though I have left the text undisturbed. From *That monster* to *put on*, is not in the folio. MALONE.

I would read—*Or habit's devil*. The poet first styles *Custom* a *monster*, and may aggravate and amplify his description by adding, that it is the “*dæmon* who presides over habit.”—That monster custom, or habit's devil, is yet an angel in this particular. STEEVENS.

⁸ To punish me by making me the instrument of this man's death, and to punish this man by my hand. For this, the reading of both the quarto, and folio, Sir T. Hanmer and the subsequent editors have substituted,

To punish him with me, and me with him. MALONE.

I take leave to vindicate the last editor of the octavo Shakspeare from any just share in the foregoing accusation. Whoever looks into the edition 1785, will see the line before us printed exactly as in this and Mr. Malone's text.—In several preceding instances a similar censure on the same gentleman has been as undeservedly implied. STEEVENS.

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do :
 Let the bloat king⁴ tempt you again to bed ;
 Pinch wanton on your cheek ; call you, his mouse ;⁵
 And let him, for a pair of reechy⁶ kisses,
 Or padding in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,
 That I essentially am not in madness,
 But mad in craft.⁷ 'Twere good, you let him know :

For

⁴ i. e. the swollen king. MALONE.

This again hints at his intemperance. He had already drank himself into a dropfy. BLACKSTONE.

The folio reads—*blunt* king. HENDERSON.

⁵ *Mouse* was once a term of endearment. STEEVENS.

This term of endearment is very ancient. MALONE.

⁶ *Reechy* is smoky. The author meant to convey a coarse idea, and was not very scrupulous in his choice of an epithet. The same, however, is applied with greater propriety to the neck of a cook-maid in *Coriolanus*. STEEVENS.

Reechy properly means *steaming with exsudation*, and seems to have been selected, to convey, in this place, its grossest import. HENLEY.

Reechy includes, I believe, *heat* as well as smoke. The verb to *reech*, which was once common, was certainly a corruption of—to *reek*. In a former passage Hamlet has remonstrated with his mother, on her living

“ In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed.” MALONE.

⁷ The reader will be pleased to see Dr. Farmer's extract from the old quarto *Historie of Hamblet*, of which he had a fragment only in his possession.—“ It was not without cause, and just occasion, that my gestures, countenances, and words, seeme to proceed from a madman, and that I desire to haue all men esteeme mee wholly depriued of sense and reasonable understanding, bycause I am well assured, that he that hath made no conscience to kill his owne brother, (accustomed to murthers, and allured with desire of gouernement without controll in his treasons) will not spare to saue himselfe with the like crueltie, in the blood and flesh of the loyns of his brother, by him massacred : and therefore it is better for me to fayne madnesse, then to use my right senses as nature hath bestowed them upon me. The bright shining clearnes thereof I am forced to hide vnder this shadow of dissimulation, as the sun doth hir beams under some great cloud, when the wether in summer-time ouercasteth : the face of a madman serueth to couer my gallant countenance, and the gestures of a fool are fit for me, to the end that, guiding myself wisely therein, I may preferue my life for the Danes and the memory of my late deceased father ; for that the desire of reuenging his death is so ingraven in my heart, that if I dye not shortly, I hope to take such and so great vengeance, that these countreyes shall for euer speake thereof. Neuertheless I must stay the time, meanes, and occasion, lest by making ouer-
 great

For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
 Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,⁷
 Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
 No, in despite of sense, and secrecy,
 Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
 Let the birds fly;⁸ and, like the famous ape,
 To try conclusions,⁹ in the basket creep,
 And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
 What thou hast said to me.

Ham. I must to England;² you know that?

Queen. Alack,
 I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

Ham. There's letters seal'd: and my two school-fellows,—
 Whom I will trust, as I will adders fang'd,³—
 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
 And marshal me to knavery: Let it work;

For

great hast, I be now the cause of mine own sodaine ruine and ouerthrow,
 and by that meanes end, before I beginne to effect my hearts desire: hee
 that hath to doe with a wicked, d'sloyall, cruell, and discourteous man,
 must vse craft, and politike inuentions, such as a fine witte can best
 imagine, not to discouer his interprise; for seeing that by force I cannot
 effect my desire, reason alloweth me by dissimulation, subtiltie, and secret
 practises to proceed therein." STEEVENS.

⁷ *Gib* was a common name for a cat. STEEVENS.

⁸ Sir John Suckling, in one of his letters, may possibly allude to the
 same story; "It is the story of the *jackanapes* and the partridges; thou
 starest after a beauty till it be lost to thee, and then let'st out another, and
 starest after that till it is gone too." WARNER.

⁹ i. e. experiments. STEEVENS.

² Shakspeare does not inform us how Hamlet came to know that he
 was to be sent to England. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were made
 acquainted with the King's intentions for the first time in the very last
 scene; and they do not appear to have had any communication with the
 prince since that time. Add to this, that in a subsequent scene, when
 the King, after the death of Polonius, informs Hamlet he was to go to
 England, he expresses great surprize, as if he had not heard any thing
 of it before.—This last, however, may, perhaps, be accounted for, as
 contributing to his design of passing for a madman. MALONE.

³ That is, adders with their *fangs* or *poisonous teeth*, undrawn. It has
 been the practice of mountebanks to boast the efficacy of their antidotes
 by playing with vipers, but they first disabled their fangs. JOHNSON.

For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer
 Hoist⁴ with his own petar : and it shall go hard,
 But I will delve one yard below their mines,
 And blow them at the moon : O, 'tis most sweet,
 When in one line two crafts directly meet.⁵—
 This man shall set me packing.
 I'll lug the guts⁶ into the neighbour room :
 Mother, good night.—Indeed, this counsellor
 Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
 Come, fir, to draw toward an end with you :⁷
 Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally ; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS.*]

ACT IV.⁸ SCENE I.

The same.

Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. There's matter in these sighs ; these profound
 heaves ;

You must translate : 'tis fit we understand them :
 Where is your son ?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.—

[*To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, who go out.*]

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night ?

King.

⁴ *Hoist*, for *hoised* ; as *past*, for *passed*. STEEVENS.

⁵ Still alluding to a countermine. MALONE.

⁶ The word *guts* was not anciently so offensive to delicacy as it is at present ; but was used by Lyly (who made the *first* attempt to polish our language) in his serious compositions. STEEVENS.

⁷ Shakspeare has been unfortunate in his management of the story of this play, the most striking circumstances of which arise so early in its formation, as not to leave him room for a conclusion suitable to the importance of its beginning. After this last interview with the Ghost, the character of Hamlet has lost all its consequence. STEEVENS.

⁸ This play is printed in the old editions without any separation of the acts. The division is modern and arbitrary ; and is here not very happy, for the pause is made at a time when there is more continuity of action than in almost any other of the scenes. JOHNSON.

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen. Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier: In his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries, *A rat! a rat!*
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed!

It had been so with us, had we been there:
His liberty is full of threats to all;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas! how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,⁹
This mad young man: but, so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit;
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore,²
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

King. O, Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,

Both

⁹ I would rather read,—*out of harm.* JOHNSON.

Out of haunt, means out of company. STEEVENS.

² Shakspeare seems to think *ore* to be *or*, that is, gold. Base metals have *ore* no less than precious. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare uses the general word *ore* to express *gold*, because it was the most excellent of ores.—I suppose we should read “*of metal base*” instead of *metals*, which much improves the construction of the passage.

M. MASON.

A *mineral* Minshew defines in his Dictionary, 1617, “Any thing that grows in mines, and contains metals.” Shakspeare seems to have used the word in this sense,—for a *rude mass of metals*. MALONE.

Minerals are *mines*. So, in *The Golden Remains of Hales of Eton*, 1693, p. 34: “Controversies of the times, like spirits in the *minerals*, with all their labour, nothing is done.” STEEVENS.

Both countenance and excuse.—Ho! Guildenstern!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:
Go, seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what's untimely done: so, haply, slander,³—
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,⁴
Transports his poison'd shot,—may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air.—O, come away!
My soul is full of discord, and dismay.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HAMLET.

Ham.—Safely stow'd,—*[Ros. &c. within. Hamlet! lord Hamlet!]* But soft,—what noise? who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis; that we may take it thence,
And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel, and not mine own.
Besides, to be demanded of a sponge!—what replication
should be made by the son of a king?

Ros.

³ — *so, haply, slander, &c.*] Neither these words, nor the following three lines and an half, are in the folio. In the quarto, 1604, and all the subsequent quartos, the passage stands thus:

“ — And what's untimely done.

“ Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,” &c.

⁴ The blank was the white mark at which shot or arrows were directed.

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, fir; that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: He keeps them, like an ape,⁵ in the corner of his jaw; first mouth'd, to be last swallow'd: When he needs what you have glean'd, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it: A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.⁶

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

Ham. The body is with the king,⁷ but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing——

Guil.

⁵ The quarto has *apple*, which is generally followed. The folio has *ape*, which Sir T. Hanmer has received, and illustrated with the following note:

“It is the way of monkeys in eating, to throw that part of their food, which they take up first, into a pouch they are provided with on each side of their jaw, and there they keep it, till they have done with the rest.” JOHNSON.

Surely this should be “like an *ape*, an *apple*.” FARMER.

The reading of the folio, *like an ape*, I believe to be the true one, because Shakspeare has the same phraseology in many other places. The word *ape* refers to the king, not to his courtiers. *He keeps them like an ape, in the corner of his jaw, &c.* means, he keeps them, *as an ape keeps food, in the corner of his jaw, &c.*

That the particular food in Shakspeare's contemplation was an *apple*, may be inferred from the following passage in *The Captain*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

“And lie, and kiss my hand unto my mistress,

“As often as *an ape* does for an *apple*.”

I cannot approve of Dr. Farmer's reading. Had our poet meant to introduce both the *ape* and the *apple*, he would, I think, have written not *like*, but “*as an ape an apple*.” MALONE.

Apple in the quarto is a mere typographical error. RITSON.

⁶ This, if I mistake not, is a proverbial sentence. MALONE.

Since the appearance of our author's play, these words have become proverbial; but no earlier instance of the idea conveyed by them, has occurred within the compass of my reading. STEEVENS.

⁷ This answer I do not comprehend. Perhaps it should be,—*The body is not with the king, for the king is not with the body.* JOHNSON.

Perhaps it may mean this,—The body is in the king's house, (i. e. the present king's,) yet the king (i. e. he who should have been king,) is

Guil. A thing, my lord?

Ham. Of nothing:⁷ bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.⁸ [Exeunt.

S C E N E III.

Another Room in the same.

Enter King, attended.

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body. How dangerous is it, that this man goes loose? Yet must not we put the strong law on him: He's lov'd of the distracted multitude, Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes; And, where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd, But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even, This sudden sending him away must seem Deliberate pause: Diseases, desperate grown, By desperate appliance are reliev'd,

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.

Or not at all.—How now? what hath befallen?

Res.

not with the body. Intimating that the usurper is here, the true king in a better place. Or it may mean—the guilt of the murder lies with the king, but the king is not where the body lies. The affected obscurity of Hamlet must excuse so many attempts to procure something like a meaning. STEEVENS.

⁷ Should it not be read – Or nothing? When the courtiers remark that Hamlet has contemptuously called the king *a thing*, Hamlet defends himself by observing, that the king must be a *thing*, or *nothing*.

JOHNSON.

The text is right. So, in *The Spanish Tragedy*:

“In troth, my lord, it is a *thing of nothing*.”

And, in one of Harvey's letters “a silly bug-beare, a sorry puffle of winde, a *thing of nothing*.” FARMER.

Mr. Steevens has given [i. e. edit. 1778] many parallelisms: but the origin of all is to be look'd for, I believe, in the 144th Psalm, ver. 5: “Man is like a *thing of nought*.” Mr. Steevens must have observed, that the book of Common Prayer, and the translation of the Bible into English, furnished our old writers with many forms of expression, some of which are still in use. WHALLEY.

⁸ There is a play among children called, *Hide fox, and all after*.

HANMER.

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he?

Ros. Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper? Where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politick worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else, to fat us; and we fat ourselves for maggots: Your fat king, and your lean beggar, is but variable service; two dishes, but to one table; that's the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king; and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing, but to show you how a king may go a progress⁹ through the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i'the other place yourself. But, indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there.

[*To some Attendants.*

Ham. He will stay till you come.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee hence
With fiery quickness: Therefore, prepare thyself;
'The bark is ready, and the wind at help,²

The

⁹ Alluding to the royal journeys of state, always styled *progresses*; a familiar idea to those who, like our author, lived during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. STEEVENS.

² I suppose it should be read,

The bark is ready, and the wind at helm. JOHNSON.

The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub, that sees them.—But, come; for
England!—Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother: Father and mother is man and wife; man
and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for Eng-
land. [Exit.

King. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed
aboard;

Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night:

Away; for every thing is seal'd and done

That else leans on the affair: Pray you, make haste.

[Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,

(As my great power thereof may give thee sense;

Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red

After the Danish sword, and thy free awe

Pays homage to us,) thou may'st not coldly set

Our sovereign process;³ which imports at full,

By letters conjuring to that effect,⁴

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;

For like the hestick in my blood he rages,

And

— at help,] i. e. at hand, ready,—ready to help or assist you.

RITSON.

³ I adhere to the reading of the quarto and folio. Mr. M. Mason observes, that “one of the common acceptations of the verb *set*, is to value or estimate; as we say to *set* at nought; and in that sense it is used here.” STEEVENS.

Our poet has here, I think, as in many other places, used an elliptical expression: “thou may'st not coldly set *by* our sovereign process;” thou may'st not *set little by it*, or estimate it lightly. “To *set by*,” Cole renders in his Dict. 1679, by *æstimo*. “To *set little by*,” he interprets *parvi-facio*. See many other instances of similar ellipses, in Vol. XIII. p. 235, n. 5. MALONE.

⁴ *Effect* was formerly used for *act* or *deed*, simply, and is so used in the line before us. MALONE.

And thou must cure me: Till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin.⁵

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.

A Plain in Denmark.

Enter FORTINBRAS, and Forces, marching.

For. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;
Tell him, that, by his licence, Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye,⁶
And let him know so.

Cap. I will do't, my lord.

For. Go softly on. [Exeunt FORTINBRAS and Forces.]

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, &c.

Ham. Good sir, whose powers are these?

Cap. They are of Norway, sir.

Ham. How purpos'd, sir,
I pray you?

Cap. Against some part of Poland.

Ham.

⁵ This being the termination of a scene, should according to our author's custom, be rhymed. Perhaps he wrote,

Howe'er my hopes, my joys are not begun.

If *baps* be retained, the meaning will be, 'till I know 'tis done, I shall be miserable, whatever befall me. JOHNSON.

The folio reads, in support of Dr. Johnson's remark,—

Howe'er my baps, my joys were ne'er begun.

Mr. Heath would read:

Howe'er 't may hap, my joys will ne'er begin. STEEVENS.

By his *baps*, he means his *successes*. His fortune was begun, but his joys were not. M. MASON.

⁶ The phrase appears to have been formulary. See *The Establishment of the Household of Prince Henry*, A. D. 1610: "Also the gentleman-usher shall be careful to see and informe all such as doe service in the Prince's eye, that they performe their duties" &c. Again, in *The Regulations for the Government of the Queen's Household*, 1627: "— all such as doe service in the Queen's eye. STEEVENS.

Ham. Who Commands them, fir?

Cap. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, fir,
Or for some frontier?

Cap. Truly to speak, fir, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground,
That hath in it no profit but the name.

To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway, or the Pole,
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Cap. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

Ham. Two thousand souls, and twenty thousand ducats,
Will not debate the question of this straw:

This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace;
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, fir.

Cap. God be wi'you, fir. [Exit Captain.]

Ros. Will't please you go, my lord?

Ham. I will be with you straight. Go a little before.

[Exeunt Ros. and GUILD.]

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good, and market of his time,⁷
Be but to sleep, and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, he, that made us with such large discourse,⁸
Looking before, and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple⁹
Of thinking too precisely on the event,—
A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,
And, ever, three parts coward,—I do not know
Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do*;

Sith

⁷ If his highest good, and *that for which he sells his time*, be to sleep and feed. JOHNSON.

Market, I think, here means *profit*. MALONE.

⁸ Such latitude of comprehension, such power of reviewing the past, and anticipating the future. JOHNSON.

⁹ Some cowardly scruple. MALONE.

Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
 To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me;
 Witnesses, this army, of such mass, and charge,
 Led by a delicate and tender prince;
 Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
 Makes mouths at the invisible event;
 Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,
 To all that fortune, death, and danger, dare,
 Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great,
 Is, not to stir without great argument;²
 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
 When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
 That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
 Excitements of my reason, and my blood,³
 And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
 That, for a fantasy, and trick of fame,
 Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot⁴
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
 Which is not tomb enough, and continent,⁵
 To hide the slain?—O, from this time forth,
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [Exit:

² This passage I have printed according to the copy. Mr. Theobald had regulated it thus:

—'Tis not to be great,
 Never to stir without great argument;
 But greatly, &c.

The sentiment of Shakspeare is partly just, and partly romantick.

—Rightly to be great,
 Is, not to stir without great argument;
 is exactly philosophical,
 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
 When honour's at the stake,

is the idea of a modern hero. But then, says he, honour is an argument, or subject of debate, sufficiently great, and when honour is at stake, we must find cause of quarrel in a straw. JOHNSON.

³ Provocations which excite both my reason and my passions to vengeance. JOHNSON.

⁴ A piece, or portion. REED.

⁵ Continent, in our author, means that which comprehends or encloses. STEEVENS.

Again, Lord Bacon on the Advancement of Learning, 4to. 1633, p. 7: "—if there be no fulnesse, then is the continent greater than the content." REED.

Elfinore. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter Queen and HORATIO.

Queen. — I will not speak with her.

Hor. She is importunate ; indeed, distract ;
Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have ?

Hor. She speaks much of her father : says, she hears,
There's tricks i'the world ; and hems, and beats her
heart ?

Spurns enviously at straws ;⁶ speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense : her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move

The hearers to collection ;⁷ they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts :
Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think, there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.⁸

Queen. 'Twere good, she were spoken with ;⁹ for she may
strew

Dangerous

⁶ *Envy* is much oftener put by our poet (and those of this time) for direct *aversion*, than for *malignity conceived at the sight of another's excellence or happiness*. STEEVENS.

⁷ i. e. to deduce consequences from such premises ; or as Mr. M. Malon observes, " endeavour to collect some meaning from them."

STEEVENS.

⁸ i. e. though her meaning cannot be certainly collected, yet there is enough to put a mischievous interpretation to it. WARBURTON.

That *unbappy* once signified *mischievous*, may be known from P. Holland's translation of *Pliny's Natural History*, Book XIX. ch. vii. : " — the shrewd and *unbappie* foules which lie upon the lands, and eat up the seed new sowne." We still use *unlucky* in the same sense.

STEEVENS.

⁹ These lines are given to the Queen in the folio, and to Horatio in the quarto. JOHNSON.

I think the two first lines of Horatio's speech [*'Twere good, &c.*] belong to him ; the rest to the Queen. BLACKSTONE.

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds :

Let her come in.

[Exit HORATIO.]

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,

Each toy² seems prologue to some great amiss :

So full of artless jealousy is guilt,

It spills itself, in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA.

Oph. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

Queen. How now, Ophelia ;

OPH. How should I your true love know³?

From another one ?

By his cockle hat and staff.

And his sandal shoon.⁴

[Singing.]

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song ?

Oph. Say you ? nay, pray you, mark.

He is dead and gone, lady,

[Sings.]

He is dead and gone ;

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

O, ho !

Queen.

In the quarto, the Queen, Horatio, and a *Gentleman*, enter at the beginning of this scene. The two speeches, "She is importunate," &c. and "She speaks much of her father," &c. are there given to the *Gentleman*, and the line now before us, as well as the two following, to *Horatio*: the remainder of this speech to the Queen. I think it probable that the regulation proposed by Sir W. Blackstone was that intended by Shakspeare. MALONE.

² Each toy is, each trifle. MALONE.

³ There is no part of this play in its representation on the stage, more pathetick than this scene ; which, I suppose, proceeds from the utter insensibility Ophelia has to her own misfortunes.

A great sensibility, or none at all, seems to produce the same effect. In the latter the audience supply what she wants, and with the former they sympathize. Sir J. REYNOLDS.

⁴ This is the description of a pilgrim. While this kind of devotion was in favour, love-intrigues were carried on under that mask. Hence the old ballads and novels made pilgrimages the subjects of their plots. The cockle-shell hat was one of the essential badges of this vocation : for the chief places of devotion being beyond sea, or on the coasts, the pilgrims were accustomed to put cockle-shells upon their hats, to denote the intention or performance of their devotion. WARBURTON.

Queen. Nay, but Ophelia,—

Oph.

Pray you, mark.

White his shroud as the mountain snow.

[Sings.

Enter King.

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

OPH. *Larded all with sweet flowers;⁵*

Which bewept to the grave did go,

With true-love showers.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, God'ield you!⁶ 'They say, the owl was a baker's daughter.⁷ Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray, let us have no words of this; but when they ask you, what it means, say you this:

Good

⁵ The expression is taken from cookery. JOHNSON.

⁶ i. e. Heaven reward you! THEOBALD.

⁷ This was a metamorphosis of the common people, arising from the mealy appearance of the owl's feathers, and her guarding the *bread* from mice. WARBURTON.

To guard the bread from mice, is rather the office of a cat than an owl. In barns and granaries, indeed, the services of the owl are still acknowledged. This was, however, no metamorphosis of the common people, but a legendary story, which both Dr. Johnson and myself have read, yet in what book at least I cannot recollect.—Our Saviour being refused bread by the daughter of a baker, is described as punishing her by turning her into an owl. STEEVENS.

This is a common story among the vulgar in Gloucestershire, and is thus related: "Our Saviour went into a baker's shop where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough into the oven to bake for him; but was reprimanded by her daughter, who insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately afterwards began to swell, and presently became of a most enormous size. Whereupon, the baker's daughter cried out, "Heugh, heugh, heugh," which owl-like noise probably induced our Saviour, for her wickedness, to transform her into that bird." This story is often related to children, in order to deter them from such illiberal behaviour to poor people. DOUCE.

*Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day,⁸
 All this morning betime,
 And I a maid at your window,
 To be your Valentine :*

*Then up he rose, and don'd his cloathes,⁹
 And dupp'd the chamber door;²
 Let in the maid, that out a maid
 Never departed more.*

King. Pretty Ophelia!

Oph. Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end on't :

*By Gis,³ and by Saint Charity,⁴
 Alack, and fye for shame!
 Young men will do't, if they come to't;
 By cock,⁵ they are to blame.*

Quoth

⁸ Old copies:

To-morrow is, &c.

The correction is Dr. Farmer's. STEEVENS.

There is a rural tradition, that about this time of year birds choose their mates. Bourne, in his *Antiquities of the Common People*, observes, that "it is a ceremony never omitted among the vulgar, to draw lots, which they term *Valentines*, on the eve before Valentine-day. The names of a select number of one sex are by an equal number of the other put into some vessel; and after that every one draws a name, which for the present is called their *Valentine*, and is also looked upon as a good omen of their being man and wife afterwards." Mr. Brand adds, that he has "searched the legend of St. Valentine, but thinks there is no occurrence in his life, that could give rise to this ceremony."

MALONE.

⁹ To *don*, is to *do on*, to put on, as *doff* is to *do off*, put off.

STEEVENS.

² To *dup*, is to *do up*; to lift the latch. It were easy to write,—
 And *op'd*—. JOHNSON.

To *dup*, was a common contraction of to *do up*.

The phrase seems to have been adopted either from *doing up the latch*, or drawing up the *portcullis*. STEEVENS.

³ I rather imagine it should be read,

By Cis, ———

That is, by St. Cecily. JOHNSON.

* *Saint Charity* is a known saint among the Roman Catholics. Spenser mentions her, *Eclog. V. 255*:

"Ah

*Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promis'd me to wed:*

[He answers.]

*So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.*

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope, all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think, they should lay him in the cold ground: My brother shall know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night ladies;⁶ good night, sweet ladies: good night, good night. [Exit.]

King. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [Exit HORATIO.]

O! this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death: And now behold,
O Gertrude, Gertrude,

When

“Ah dear lord, and sweet *Saint Charity!*”

I find, by *Gisse*, used as an adjuration, both by Galcoigne in his *Poems*, by Preston in his *Cambyses*, and in the comedy of *See me, and see me not*, 1618. STEEVENS.

In the scene between the Bastard Faulconbridge and the friars and nunne in the First Part of *The troublesome Raigne of King John*, (edit. 1779, p. 256. &c.) the nunne swears by *Gis*, and the friars pray to *Saint Withold* (another obsolete saint mentioned in *King Lear*) and adjure him by *Saint Charitie* to hear them. BLACKSTONE.

There is not the least mention of any saint whose name corresponds with *Gis*, either in the *Roman Calendar*, the service in *Usum Sarum*, or in the *Benedictionary* of Bishop A. helwold. I believe the word to be only a corrupted abbreviation of *Jesus*, the letters J. H. S. being anciently all that was set down to denote that sacred name, on altars, the covers of books, &c. RIDLEY.

Though *Gis* may be, and I believe is, only a contraction of *Jesus*, there is certainly a *Saint Gissen*, with whose name it corresponds.

RITSON.

⁵ This is likewise a corruption of the sacred name. STEEVENS.

⁶ In Marlow's *Tamburlaine*, 1590, Zabina in her frenzy uses the same expression, “Hell, make ready my coach, my chair, my jewels. I come, I come.” MALONE.

When sorrows come,⁷ they come not single spies,
 But in battalions! First, her father slain;
 Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
 Of his own just remove: The people muddied,
 Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts, and whispers,
 For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,⁸
 In hugger-mugger to inter him:⁹ Poor Ophelia
 Divided from herself, and her fair judgement;
 Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts.
 Last, and as much containing as all these,
 Her brother is in secret come from France:
 Feeds on his wonder,² keeps himself in clouds,
 And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
 Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,³
 Will nothing stick our person to arraign
 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,

Like

⁷ In *Ray's Proverbs* we find, "Misfortunes seldom come alone," as a proverbial phrase. REED.

⁸ But *unskilfully*; with *greenness*; that is, without *maturity* of judgement. JOHNSON.

⁹ All the modern editions that I have consulted, give it,

In private to inter him;—

That the words now replaced are better, I do not undertake to prove; it is sufficient that they are Shakspeare's: if phraseology is to be changed as words grow uncouth by disuse, or gross by vulgarity, the history of every language will be lost; we shall no longer have the words of any author; and, as these alterations will be often unskilfully made, we shall in time have very little of his meaning. JOHNSON.

² The folio reads,

Keeps on his wonder,—

The quarto,

Feeds on this wonder,—

Thus the true reading is picked out from between them. Sir T. Hanmer reads unnecessarily,

Feeds on his anger,—. JOHNSON.

³ Sir T. Hanmer reads,

Whence animosity, of matter beggar'd.

He seems not to have understood the connection. *Wherein*, that is, *in which pestilent speeches, necessity, or, the obligation of an accuser to support his charge, will nothing stick, &c.* JOHNSON.

Like to a murdering-piece,⁴ in many places
Gives me superfluous death!

Queen.

[A noise within.
Alack what noise is this?

Enter a Gentleman.

King. Attend.

Where are my Switzers?⁵ Let them guard the door :
What is the matter?

Gent.

Save yourself, my lord ;
The ocean overpeering of his list,⁶
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,

Than

⁴ Such a piece as assassins use, with many barrels. It is necessary to apprehend this, to see the justness of the similitude.

WARBURTON.

It appears from a passage in Smith's *Sea Grammar*, 1627, that it was a piece of ordnance used in ships of war: "A case-shot is any kinde of small bullets, nailes, old iron, or the like, to put into the case, to shoot out of the ordnances or *murderers*; these will doe much mischief," &c.

STEEVENS.

A *murdering-piece* was the specifick term in Shakspeare's time, for a piece of ordnance, or small cannon. The word is found in Cole's Latin Dictionary, 1679, and rendered, "*tormentum murale*."

The small cannon, which are, or were used in the forecastle, half-deck or steerage of a ship of war, were within this century, called *murdering-pieces*. MALONE.

Perhaps what is now, from the manner of it, called a *swivel*. It is mentioned in Sir T. Roes *Voiage to the E. Indies*, at the end of Della Valle's *Travels*, 1665: "—— the East India Company had a very little pinnace...mann'd she was with ten men, and had only one small *murdering-piece* within her." Probably it was never charged with a single ball, but always with shot, pieces of old iron," &c. RITSON.

⁵ I have observed in many of our old plays, that the guards, attendant on Kings, are called *Switzers*, and that without any regard to the country where the scene lies. REED.

The reason is, because the Swiss in the time of our poet, as at present, were hired to fight the battles of other nations. MALONE.

⁶ The lists are the barriers which the spectators of a tournament must not pass. JOHNSON.

List, in this place, only signifies *boundary*, i. e. the shore.

The *selvage* of cloth was in both places, I believe, in our author's thoughts. MALONE.

Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
 O'erbears your officers ! The rabble call him, lord ;
 And as the world were now but to begin,
 Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
 The ratifiers and props of every word,⁷
 They cry, *Chorise we ; Laertes shall be king !*
 Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds,
Laertes shall be king, Laertes king !

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry !
 O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs.⁸

King. The doors are broke.

[*Noise within.*
Enter

⁷ By *word* is here meant a declaration, or proposal. It is determined to this sense, by the inference it hath to what had just preceded :

“ The rabble call him lord,” &c.

This acclamation, which is the *word* here spoken of, was made without regard to antiquity, or received custom, whose occurrence, however, is necessarily required to confer validity and stability in every proposal of this kind. HEATH.

Sir T. Hanmer would transpose this line and the next. Dr. Warburton proposes to read, *ward* ; and Dr. Johnson, *weal*, instead of *word*. I should be rather for reading *work*. TYRWHITT.

In the first folio there is only a comma at the end of the above line ; and will not the passage bear this construction ?—The rabble call him lord, and as if the world were now but to begin, and as if the ancient custom of hereditary succession were unknown, they, the ratifiers and props of every word he utters, cry,—Let us make choice, that Laertes shall be king. TOLLET.

This construction might certainly be admitted, and the ratifiers and props of every word might be understood to be applied to the rabble mentioned in a preceding line, without Sir T. Hanmer's transposition of this and the following line ; but there is no authority for what Mr. Tollet adds, “ of every word he [Laertes] utters,” for the poet has not described Laertes as having uttered a word. If therefore the rabble are called the ratifiers and props of every word, we must understand, “ of every word uttered by themselves ;” which is so tame, that it would be unjust to our poet to suppose that to have been his meaning. Ratifiers, &c. refer not to the people, but to custom and antiquity, which the speaker says are the true ratifiers and props of every word. The last word, however, of the line may well be suspected to be corrupt ; and Mr. Tyrwhitt has probably suggested the true reading. MALONE.

⁸ Hounds run counter when they trace the trail backwards.

JOHNSON.

Enter LAERTES arm'd; Danes following.

Laer. Where is this king?—Sirs, stand you all without.

Dan. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you give me leave.

Dan. We will, we will.

[They retire without the door.]

Laer. I thank you:—keep the door.—O thou vile king,
Give me my father.

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood, that's calm, proclaims me
bastard;

Cries, cuckold, to my father; brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow,⁹
Of my true mother.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd;—Let him go, Gertrude;—
Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience, and grace to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation: To this point I stand,—
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most thoroughly for my father.

King.

⁹ i. e. clean, not defiled. To *besmirch*, our author uses, Act I. sc. v. and again in *K. Henry V.* Act IV. sc. iii.

This seems to be an allusion to a proverb often introduced in the old comedies. Thus, in *The London Prodigal*, 1605: “—as true as the skin between any man's brows.” STEEVENS.

King. Who shall stay you?

Laer. My will, not all the world's :
And, for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

King. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,
That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?

Laer. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them then?

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms ;
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child, and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgement 'pear,
As day does to your eye.

Danes. [*Within.*] Let her come in.

Laer. How now ! what noise is that ?

Enter OPHELIA, fantastically dress'd with straws and flowers.

O heat, dry up my brains ! tears, seven time salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye !—
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam, O rose of May !
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia !
O heavens ! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life ?
Nature is fine in love : and, where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.²

Oph.

² These lines are not in the quarto, and might have been omitted in the folio without great loss, for they are obscure and affected ; but, I think, they require no emendation. Love (says Laertes) is the passion

Oph. *They bore him barefac'd on the bier ;
 Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny : ³
 And in his grave rain'd many a tear ;—*

Fare you well, my dove !

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
 It could not move thus.

Oph. You must sing, *Down a-down, an you call him a-
 down-a.* O, how the wheel ⁴ becomes it ! It is the false
 steward, that stole his master's daughter.

Laer.

passion by which *nature is most exalted and refined*; and as substances,
refined and subtilised, easily obey any impulse, or follow any attraction,
 some part of nature, so purified and *refined*, flies off after the attracting
 object, after the thing it loves :

“ As into air the purer spirits flow,
 “ And separate from their kindred dregs below,
 “ So flew her soul.” JOHNSON.

The meaning of the passage may be—That her wits, like the spirit of
 fine essences, flew off or evaporated. *Fine*, however, sometimes signifies
artful. STEEVENS.

³ These words, which were the burthen of a song, are found only in
 the folio. MALONE.

⁴ The story alluded to I do not know ; but perhaps the lady stolen by
 the steward was reduced to *spin*. JOHNSON.

The *wheel* may mean no more than *the burthen of the song*, which she
 had just repeated, and as such was formerly used. I met with the fol-
 lowing observation in an old quarto black-letter book, published before the
 time of Shakspeare :

“ The song was accounted a good one, thogh it was not moche graced
 by the *whee*le, which in no wise accorded with the subject matter
 thereof.”

I quote this from memory, and from a book, of which I cannot recollect
 the exact title or date ; but the passage was in a preface to some songs or
 sonnets. I well remember, to have met with the word in the same sense
 in other old books.

Rota, indeed, as I am informed, is the ancient musical term in Latin,
 for the burden of a song. Dr. Farmer, however, has just favoured me
 with a quotation from Nicholas Breton's *Toyes of an idle Head*, 1577,
 which at once explains the word *wheel* in the sense for which I have
 contended :

“ That I may sing, full merrily,
 “ Not heigh ho *wycle*, but care away !”

i. e. not with a melancholy, but a cheerful burthen.

I formerly supposed that the ballad, alluded to by Ophelia, was that
 entered on the books of the Stationers' Company ; “ October 1580.

Four

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.⁵

Laer. A document in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines;⁶—there's
rue

Four ballades of the Lord of Lorn and the *False Steward*, &c. but Mr. Ritson assures me there is no corresponding *theft* in it. STEEVENS.

I am inclined to think that *wheel* is here used in its ordinary sense, and that these words allude to the occupation of the girl who is supposed to sing the song alluded to by Ophelia.

A musical antiquary may perhaps contend, that the controverted words of the text allude to an ancient instrument mentioned by Chaucer, and called by him a *rote*, by others a *vielle*; which was played upon by the fiction of a *wheel*. MALONE.

⁵ There is probably some mythology in the choice of these herbs, but I cannot explain it. *Pansies* is for *thoughts*, because of its name, *Pensees*; but why *rosemary* indicates *remembrance*, except that it is an ever-green, and carried at funerals, I have not discovered. JOHNSON.

Rosemary was anciently supposed to strengthen the memory, and was not only carried at funerals, but worn at weddings. STEEVENS.

Rosemary being supposed to strengthen the memory, was the emblem of fidelity in lovers. MALONE.

⁶ Greene, in his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, 1620, calls *fennel*, *women's weeds*: "fit generally for that sex, sith while they are maidens, they wish wantonly."

I know not of what *columbines* were supposed to be emblematical. They are again mentioned in *All Fools*, by Chapman, 1605:

"What's that?—a columbine?"

"No: that *thankless* flower grows not in my garden."

Gerard, however, and other herbalists, impute few, if any, virtues to them; and they may therefore be styled *thankless*, because they appear to make no grateful return for their creation.

From the *Caltha Poetarum*, 1599, it should seem as if this flower was the emblem of cuckoldom:

"—— the blue *cornuted* columbine,

"Like to the crooked horns of Acheloy." STEEVENS.

Columbine was an emblem of cuckoldom, on account of the horns of its nectaria, which are remarkable in this plant. See *Aquilegia*, in Linnæus's *Genera*, 684. S. W.

The columbine was emblematical of forsaken lovers:

"The columbine in tawny often taken,

"Is then ascribed to such as are forsaken."

Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*, Book I. Song ii. 1613.

HOLL WHITE:

Ophelia

rue for you ; and here's some for me :— we may call it, herb of grace o'sundays :⁷— you may wear your rue with a difference.⁸— There's a daisy.⁹— I would give you some violets ?

Ophelia gives her fennel and columbines to the king. In the collection of Sonnets quoted above, the former is thus mentioned :

“ Fennel is for flatterers,

“ An evil thing 'is sure ;

“ But I have alwaies meant truely,

“ With constant heart most pure.” MALONE.

⁷ I believe there is a quibble meant in this passage ; *rue* anciently signifying the same as *Ruth*, i. e. sorrow. Ophelia gives the Queen some, and keeps a proportion of it for herself.

Herb of grace is one of the titles which *Tucca* gives to *William Rufus*, in Decker's *Satiromastix*. I suppose the first syllable of the surname *Rufus* introduced the quibble. STEEVENS.

The following passage from Greene's *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, will furnish the best reason for calling *rue* herb of grace o'sundays : “ — some of them smil'd and said, *Rue* was called *Herbegrace*, which though they scorned in their youth, they might wear in their age, and that it was never too late to say *miserere*.” HENLEY.

Herb of grace was not the *sunday name*, but the *every day name* of *rue*. In the common dictionaries of Shakspeare's time it is called *herb of grace*. There is no ground therefore for supposing, with Dr. Warburton, that *rue* was called herb of grace, from its being used in exorcisms performed in churches on Sundays.

Ophelia only means, I think, that the queen may with peculiar propriety on *Sundays*, when she solicits pardon for that crime which she has so much occasion to *rue* and repent of, call her *rue*, *herb of grace*.

Ophelia, after having given the queen *rue* to remind her of the sorrow and contrition she ought to feel for her incestuous marriage, tells her, she may wear it with a *difference*, to distinguish it from that worn by Ophelia herself ; because her tears flowed from the loss of a father, those of the queen ought to flow for her guilt.” MALONE.

⁸ This seems to refer to the rules of heraldry, where the younger brothers of a family bear the same arms *with a difference*, or mark of distinction.

There may, however, be somewhat more implied here than is expressed. *You, madam*, (says Ophelia to the Queen,) *may call your RUE by its Sunday name, HERB OF GRACE, and so wear it with a difference to distinguish it from mine, which can never be any thing but merely RUE, i. e. sorrow.*

STEEVENS.

⁹ Greene, in his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, has explained the significance of this flower : “ — Next them grew the DISSEMBLING DAISIE, to warne such light-of-love wenches not to trust every faire promise that such amorous bachelors make them.” HENLEY.

lets; but they wither'd all, when my father died :²—They say, he made a good end,—

*For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,*³— [Sings.]

Laer. Thought and affliction,⁴ passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour, and to prettiness.

Oph. *And will he not come again?* [Sings.]
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll :
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan ;
God 'a mercy on his soul !

And of all christian souls!⁵ I pray God. God be wi' you!
[Exit OPHELIA.]

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,⁶

Or

² The violet is thus characterized in the old collection of Sonnets above quoted, printed in 1584:

“ *Violet is for faithfulness,*
“ *Which in me shall abide ;*
“ *Hoping likewise that from your heart*
“ *You will not let it slide.*” MALONE.

³ This is part of an old song, mentioned likewise by Beaumont and Fletcher, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Act IV. sc. i:

“ — I can sing the broom,
“ *And Bonny Robin.*” STEEVENS.

⁴ *Thought* here, as in many other places, signifies melancholy.

MALONE.

⁵ This is the common conclusion to many of the ancient monumental inscriptions. See Weever's *Funeral Monuments*, p. 657, 658. Berthelette, the publisher of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, 1554, speaking first of the funeral of Chaucer, and then of Gower, says: “ — he lieth buried in the monasterie of Seynt Peter's at Westminster, &c. *On whose soules and all christen, Jesu have mercie.*” STEEVENS.

⁶ The folio reads—*common*. To *common* is to *commune*. This word, pronounced as anciently spelt, is still in frequent provincial use.

STEEVENS.

Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
 Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
 And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:
 If by direct or by collateral hand
 They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
 Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
 To you in satisfaction; but, if not,
 Be you content to lend your patience to us,
 And we shall jointly labour with your soul
 To give it due content.

Laer. Let this be so;
 His means of death, his obscure funeral,—
 No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,⁷
 No noble rite, nor formal ostentation,—
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
 That I must call't in question.

King. So you shall;
 And where the offence is, let the great axe fall.
 I pray you, go with me.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E IV.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HORATIO, and a Servant.

Hor. What are they, that would speak with me?

Serv. Sailors, sir;

They say, they have letters for you.

Hor.

Let them come in.—

[*Exit Servant.*]

I do not know from what part of the world
 I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

Enter

⁷ It was the custom, in the times of our author, to hang a sword over the grave of a knight. JOHNSON.

This practice is uniformly kept up to this day. Not only the sword, but the helmet, gauntlet, spurs, and tabard (i. e. a coat whereon the armorial ensigns were anciently depicted, whence the term *coat of armour*) are hung over the grave of every knight. SIR J. HAWKINS.

Enter Sailors.

1. *Sail.* God blefs you, fir.

Hor. Let him blefs thee too.

1. *Sail.* He fhall fir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, fir; it comes from the ambaffadour that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Hor. [Reads.] Horatio, when thou fhalt have overlook'd this, give thefe fellows fome means to the king; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at fea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chace: Finding ourfelves too flow of fail, we put on a compell'd valour; and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant, they got clear of our fhip; fo I alone became their prifoner. They have dealt with me, like thieves of mercy; but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have fent; and repair thou to me with as much hafte as thou would'ft fly death. I have words to fpeak in thine ear, will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter.⁸ Thefe good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenftern hold their courfe for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

He that thou knoweft thine, Hamlet.

Come, I will give you way for thefe your letters;
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.

Another Room in the fame.

Enter KING and LAERTES.

King. Now muft your confcience my acquittance feal,
And you muft put me in your heart for friend;

Sith

⁸ The *bore* is the caliber of a gun, or the capacity of the barrel. The *matter* (fays Hamlet) would carry heavier words. JOHNSON.

Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he, which hath your noble father slain,
Pursu'd my life.

Laer. It well appears:—But tell me,
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

King. O, for two special reasons;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unfinew'd,
But yet to me they are strong. The queen, his mother,
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself,
(My virtue, or my plague, be it either which,)
She is so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a publick count I might not go,
Is, the great love the general gender⁹ bear him:
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Work like the spring² that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,³
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost;

A sister

⁹ The *common race* of the people. JOHNSON.

² This simile is neither very seasonable in the deep interest of this conversation, nor very accurately applied. If the *spring* had changed base metals to gold, the thought had been more proper. JOHNSON.

The allusion here is to the qualities still ascribed to the dropping well at Knareborough in Yorkshire. Camden (edit. 1590, p. 564,) thus mentions it: "Sub quo fons est in quem ex impendentibus rupibus aquæ guttatim distillant, unde DROPPING WELL vocant, in quem quicquid ligni immittitur, lapideo cortice brevi obduci & lapidescere observatum est."

REED.

³ Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—for so *loved arm'd*. If these words have any meaning, it should seem to be—The instruments of offence I employ, would have proved too weak to injure one who is so *loved and arm'd* by the affection of the people. Their love, like *armour*, would revert the arrow to the bow. STEEVENS.

Loued arm'd is as extraordinary a corruption as any that is found in these plays. MALONE.

A sister driven into desperate terms;
 Whose worth, if praises may go back again,⁴
 Stood challenger on mount of all the age
 For her perfections:—But my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that; you must not
 think,
 That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger,⁵
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:
 I lov'd your father, and we love ourself;
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine,—
 How now? what news?

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:
 This to your majesty; this to the queen.

King. From Hamlet! Who brought them?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not;
 They were given me by Claudio, he receiv'd them
 Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes you shall hear them:—
 Leave us. [Exit Messenger.]

[Reads.] *High and mighty, you shall know, I am set naked
 on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly
 eyes: when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount
 the occasion of my sudden and more strange return. Hamlet.*

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?
 Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

Laer. Know you the hand?

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character. *Naked,—*
 And, in a postscript here, he says, *alone:*
 Can you advise me?

Laer. I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come;

It

⁴ If I may praise what has been, but is now to be found no more.

JOHNSON.

⁵ It is wonderful that none of the advocates for the learning of
 Shakspeare have told us that this line is imitated from Persius, Sat. ii:

“Idcirco stolidam præbet tibi vellere barbam

“Jupiter?” STEEVENS.

It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
Thus diddest thou.

King. If it be so, Laertes,—
As how should it be so?—how otherwise?—
Will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. Ay, my lord;
So you will not o'er-rule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,—
As checking at his voyage,⁵ and that he means
No more to undertake it,—I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe;
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,
And call it, accident.

Laer. My lord, I will be rul'd;
The rather, if you could devise it so,
That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him,
As did that one; and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.⁶

Laer. What part is that, my lord?

King. A very ribband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears,
Than settled age his fables, and his weeds,
Importing⁷ health and graveness.—Two months since,

Here

⁵ The phrase is from falconry; and may be justified from the following passage in Hinde's *Eliosto Libidinoso*, 1606: "—— For who knows not, quoth she, that this hawk, which comes now so fair to the fist, may to-morrow *check* at the lure?" STEEVENS.

⁶ Of the lowest rank. *Siege*, for *seat*, *place*. JOHNSON.

⁷ *Importing* here may be, not *inferring* by logical consequence, but *producing* by physical effect. A young man regards show in his dress, an old man, *wealth*. JOHNSON.

Here was a gentleman of Normandy,—
 I have seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
 And they can well on horseback: but this gallant
 Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;
 And to such wond'rous doing brought his horse,
 As he had been incorps'd and demi-natur'd
 With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought,
 That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,⁸
 Come short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman, was't?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamord.

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well: he is the brooch, indeed,
 And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you:
 And gave you such a matterly report,
 For art and exercise in your defence,⁹
 And for your rapier most especial,
 That he cried out, 'twould be a fight indeed,
 If one could match you: the scrimers² of their nation,
 He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
 If you oppos'd them: Sir, this report of his
 Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,
 That he could nothing do, but wish and beg
 Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.
 Now, out of this,—

Laer. What out of this, my lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?

Or

Importing health, I apprehend, means, denoting an attention to health.

MALONE.

Importing may only signify—implying, denoting.

Mr. Malone's explanation, however, may be the true one.

STEEVENS.

⁸ I could not contrive so many proofs of dexterity as he could perform.

JOHNSON.

⁹ That is, in the science of defence. JOHNSON.

² The fencers. JOHNSON.

From *escrimeur*, Fr. a fencer. MALONE.

This unfavourable description of the French swordsmen is not in the folio. STEEVENS.

Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think, you did not love your father;
But that I know, love is begun by time;³
And that I see, in passages of proof,⁴
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick, or snuff, that will abate it;
And nothing is at a like goodnes still;
For goodnes, growing to a plurify,⁵
Dies in his own too-much: That we would do,
We should do when we would; for this *would* changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many,

As

³ This is obscure. The meaning may be, *love* is not innate in us, and co-essential to our nature, but begins at a certain time from some external cause, and being always subject to the operations of time, suffers change and diminution. JOHNSON.

The king reasons thus:—"I do not suspect that you did not love your father; but I know that time abates the force of affection." I therefore suspect that we ought to read:

— *love is begone by time;*

I suppose that Shakspeare places the syllable *be* before *gone*, as we say *be-paint*, *be-spatter*, *be-think*, &c. M. MASON.

⁴ In transactions of daily experience. JOHNSON.

⁵ I would believe, for the honour of Shakspeare, that he wrote *plethory*. But I observe the dramatick writers of that time frequently call a fullness of blood a *plurify*, as if it came, not from *πλεῖρα*, but from *plus*, *pluris*. WARBURTON.

I think the word should be spelt—*plurify*. This passage is fully explained by one in Mascel's treatise on cattle, 1602, p. 137: "Against the blood, or *plurifie* of blood. The disease of blood is, some young horses will feed, and being fat will *increase* blood, and so grow to a *plurisie*, and die thereof if he have not soon help." TOLLET.

We should certainly read *plurify*, as Tollet observes. M. MASON.

Dr. Warburton is right. The word is spelt *plurify* in the quarto, 1604, and is used in the same sense as here, in *'Tis Pity she's a Whore*, by Ford, 1633. MALONE.

Mr. Pope introduced this simile in the *Essay on Criticism*, v. 303:

"For works may have more wit than does them good,

"*As bodies perish through excess of blood.*"

Ascham has a thought very similar to Pope's: "Twenty to one, offend more, in writing to much, then to litle: *even as twenty, fall into sicknesse, rather by ouer much fulnes, then by any lacke or emptinesse.*" *The Schole-Master*, 4to. bl. 1. fol. 43. HOLT WHITE.

As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
 And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,⁶
 That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o'the ulcer:
 Hamlet comes back; What would you undertake,
 To show yourself in deed your father's son
 More than in words?

Laer. To cut his throat i'the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
 Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
 Will you do this, keep close within your chamber:

Hamlet,

⁶ A *spendthrift sigh* is a *sigh* that makes an unnecessary waste of the vital flame. It is a notion very prevalent, that *sighs* impair the strength, and wear out the animal powers. JOHNSON.

So, in the *Governall of Helthe*, &c. printed by Wynkyn de Worde:
 "And for why whan a man casteth out that noble humour too moche,
 he is hugely dyscolored, and his body moche febled, more then he lete
 four *sytbes*, soo moche blode oute of his body." STEEVENS.

Hence they are called, in *King Henry VI.*—blood-consuming *sighs*.
 Again, in *Pericles*, 1609:

"Do not consume your blood with sorrowing."

The idea is enlarged upon in Fenton's *Tragical Discourses*, 1579: "Why
 flaye you not in tyme the source of your scorching *sighes*, that have
 already drayned your body of his wholesome humoures, appoynted by
 nature to gyve sucke to the entrals and inward parts of you?"

The original quarto, as well as the folio, reads—a spendthrift's sigh;
 but I have no doubt that it was a corruption, arising from the first letter
 of the following word *sigh*, being an *s*. I have therefore, with the other
 modern editors, printed—*spendthrift sigh*, following a late quarto, (which
 however is of no authority,) printed in 1611. That a sigh, if it con-
 sumes the blood, *hurts us by easing*, or is prejudicial to us on the whole,
 though it affords a temporary relief, is sufficiently clear: but the former
 part of the line, *and then this should*, may require a little explanation.
 I suppose the king means to say, that if we do not promptly execute
 what we are convinced we *should* or ought to do, we shall afterwards in
 vain repent our not having seized the fortunate moment for action: and
 this opportunity which we have let go by us, and the reflection that we
should have done that, which, from supervening accidents, it is no longer
 in our power to do, is as prejudicial and painful to us as a blood-consuming
 sigh, that at once hurts and eases us.

I apprehend the poet meant to compare such a conduct, and the conse-
 quent reflection, *only* to the pernicious quality which he supposed to be an-
 nexed to sighing, and not to the temporary ease which it affords. His
 similes, as I have frequently had occasion to observe, seldom run on four
 feet. MALONE.

Hamlet, return'd, shall know you are come home :
 We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
 And set a double varnish on the fame
 The Frenchman gave you ; bring you, in fine, together,
 And wager o'er your heads : he, being remiss,⁷
 Most generous, and free from all contriving,
 Will not peruse the foils ; so that, with ease,
 Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
 A sword unbated,⁸ and, in a pass of practice,⁹
 Requite him for your father.

Laer.

I will do't :

And, for the purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
 I bought an unction of a mountebank,
 So mortal, that, but dip a knife in it,
 Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,
 Collected from all simples that have virtue
 Under the moon, can save the thing from death,
 That is but scratch'd withal : I'll touch my point
 With this contagion ; that, if I gall him slightly,
 It may be death.²

King.

Let's further think of this ;
 Weigh, what convenience, both of time and means,

May

⁷ He being not vigilant or cautious. JOHNSON.

⁸ i. e. not blunted as foils are. Or, as one edition has it, *embaited* or *envenomed*. POPE.

There is no such reading as *embaited* in any edition. In Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, it is said of one of the *Metelii*, that "he shewed the people the cruel fight of fencers, at *unrebated* swords."

STEEVENS.

Not blunted, as foils are by a button fixed to the end. MALONE.

⁹ Practice is often by Shakspeare, and other writers, taken for an *insidious stratagem*, or *privy treason*, a sense not incongruous to this passage, where yet I rather believe, that nothing more is meant than a *thrust for exercise*. JOHNSON.

A *pass of practice* is a *favourite pass*, one that Laertes was well practised in. The treachery on this occasion, was his using a sword *unbated* and *envenomed*. M. MASON.

² It is a matter of surprise, that no one of Shakspeare's numerous and able commentators has remarked, with proper warmth and detestation, the villainous assassin-like treachery of Laertes in this horrid plot. There is the more occasion that he should be here pointed out an object of abhorrence, as he is a character we are, in some preceding parts of the play, led to respect and admire. RITSON.

May fit us to our shape:³ if this should fail,
 And that our drift look through our bad performance,
 'Twere better not assay'd; therefore, this project
 Should have a back, or second, that might hold,
 If this should blast in proof.⁴ Soft;—let me see;—
 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings,—
 I ha't:

When in your motion you are hot and dry,
 (As make your bouts more violent to that end,)
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have preferr'd him⁵
 A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,⁶
 Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

Enter Queen.

How now, sweet queen?

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
 So fast they follow:—Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?

Queen. There is a willow grows ascaunt the brook,
 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
 Therewith fantastick garlands did she make
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,⁷

That

³ May enable us to assume proper characters, and to act our part.

JOHNSON.

⁴ This, I believe, is a metaphor taken from a mine, which, in the proof or execution, sometimes breaks out with an ineffectual blast.

JOHNSON.

The word *proof* shows the metaphor to be taken from the trying or proving fire-arms or cannon, which often *blast* or *burst* in the *proof*.

STEEVENS.

⁵ i. e. presented to him. Thus the quarto, 1604. The word indeed is mis-spelt, *prefard*. The folio reads—I'll have *prepar'd* him.

MALONE.

To *prefer* (as Mr. Malone observes) certainly means—to *present*, or *offer*. STEEVENS.

⁶ For *stuck*, read *tuck*, a common name for a rapier. BLACKSTONE.

Your venom'd *stuck* is, your venom'd thrust. *Stuck* was a term of the fencing-school. MALONE.

⁷ By *long purples* is meant a plant, the modern botanical name of which is *orchis morio mas*, anciently *testiculus morionis*. The grosser name by

That liberal⁸ shepherds give a grosser name,
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
 There on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds
 Clambering to hang, an envious siver broke;
 When down her weedy trophies, and herself,
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
 And, mermaid-like, a while they bore her up:
 Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes;⁹
 As one incapable of her own distress,
 Or like a creature native and indu'd
 Unto that element:² but long it could not be,
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.³

Laer.

which it passes, is sufficiently known in many parts of England, and particularly in the county where Shakspeare lived. Thus far Mr. Warner. Mr. Collins adds, that in Suffex it is still called *dead men's bands*; and that in Lyte's *Herbal*, 1578, its various names, too gross for repetition, are preserved.

Dead men's thumbs are mentioned in an ancient bl. l. ballad, entitled *The deceased Maiden Lover*. STEEVENS.

One of the grosser names of this plant Gertrude had a particular reason to avoid:—*the rampant widow*. MALONE.

⁸ — liberal —] *Licentious*. REED.

Liberal is free-spoken, licentious in language. So, in *Orbello*: “Is he not a most profane and *liberal* counsellor?” MALONE.

⁹ *Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes;*] Fletcher, in his *Scornful Lady*, very invidiously ridicules this incident:

“I will run mad first, and if that get not pity,

“I’ll drown myself to a most dismal ditty.” WARBURTON.

² I do not think the word *indued* is sense in this place; and believe we should read *inured*.

Shakspeare seems to have forgot himself in this scene, as there is not a single circumstance in the relation of Ophelia's death, that induces us to think she had drowned herself intentionally. M. MASON.

As we are indued with certain original dispositions and propensities at our birth, Shakspeare here uses *indued* with great licentiousness, for formed by nature; clothed, endowed, or furnished, with properties suited to the element of water.

Our old writers used *indued* and *endowed* indiscriminately. MALONE.

³ In the first scene of the next act we find Ophelia buried with such rites as betoken she *foredid her own life*. It should be remembered, that the account here given, is that of a friend; and that the queen could not possibly know what passed in the mind of Ophelia, when she placed herself

Laer. Alas then, she is drown'd?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears: But yet
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,
The woman will be out.—Adieu, my lord!
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly drowns it. [Exit.

King. Let's follow, Gertrude:
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I, this will give it start again;
Therefore, let's follow. [Exeunt:

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Church-yard.

Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.

1. *Clo.* Is she to be bury'd in christian burial, that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2. *Clo.* I tell thee, she is; therefore, make her grave straight: the crowner hath set on her, and finds it christian burial.

1. *Clo.* How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

2. *Clo.* Why, 'tis found so.

1. *Clo.* It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an

herself in so perilous a situation. After the facts had been weighed and considered, the priest in the next act pronounces, that *her death was doubtful*. MALONE.

+ Make her grave from east to west in a direct line parallel to the church; not from north to south, athwart the regular line. This, I think, is meant. JOHNSON.

I cannot think that this means any more than *make her grave immediately*. She is to be buried in *christian burial*, and consequently the grave is to be made as usual. STEEVENS.

an act: and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform:⁵ Argal, she drown'd herself wittingly.

2. *Cl.* Nay, but hear you, Goodman delver.

1. *Cl.* Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: If the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that: but if the water come to him, and drown him, he drowns not himself: Argal, he, that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

2. *Cl.* But is this law?

1. *Cl.* Ay, marry is't; crowner's-quest law.⁶

2. *Cl.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been bury'd out of christian burial.

1. *Cl.* Why, there thou say'st: And the more pity; that great folks should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even christian.⁷

Come;

⁵ Ridicule on scholastick divisions without distinction; and of distinctions without difference. WARBURTON.

⁶ I strongly suspect that this is a ridicule on the case of Dame Hales, reported by Plowden in his commentaries, as determined in 3 Eliz.

It seems, her husband sir James Hales had drowned himself in a river; and the question was, whether by this act a forfeiture of a lease from the dean and chapter of Canterbury, which he was possessed of, did not accrue to the crown: an inquisition was found before the coroner, which found him *felo de se*. The legal and logical subtilties, arising in the course of the argument of this case, gave a very fair opportunity for a sneer at *crowner's quest-law*. The expression, a little before, that *an act hath three branches*, &c. is so pointed an allusion to the case I mention, that I cannot doubt but that Shakspeare was acquainted with, and meant to laugh at it.

It may be added, that on this occasion a great deal of subtilty was used, to ascertain whether sir James was the *agent* or the *patient*; or, in other words, whether *he went to the water*, or *the water came to him*. The cause of sir James's madness was the circumstance of his having been the judge who condemned *lady Jane Grey*. SIR J. HAWKINS.

If Shakspeare meant to allude to the case of Dame Hales, (which indeed seems not improbable,) he must have heard of that case in conversation; for it was determined before he was born, and Plowden's Commentaries, in which it is reported, were not translated into English till a few years ago. Our author's study was probably not much encumbered with old French Reports. MALONE.

⁷ So, all the old books, and rightly. An old English expression for fellow-christian; THIRLEY.

Come; my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2. *Cl.* Was he a gentleman?

1. *Cl.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

2. *Cl.* Why, he had none.

1. *Cl.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the scripture? The scripture says, Adam digg'd; Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answer'st me not to the purpose, confests thyself—⁸

2. *Cl.* Go to.

1. *Cl.* What is he, that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2. *Cl.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1. *Cl.* I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well: But how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill, to say, the gallows is built stronger than the church; argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again; come.

2. *Cl.* Who builds⁹ stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

1. *Cl.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.²

2. *Cl.* Marry, now I can tell.

1. *Cl.* To't.

2. *Cl.* Mafs, I cannot tell.

Enter

⁸ *And be bang'd*, the Clown, I suppose, would have said, if he had not been interrupted. This was a common proverbial sentence. See *Othello*, Act IV. sc. i.—He might, however, have intended to say, *confests thyself an ass*. MALONE.

⁹ The inquisitive reader may meet with an assemblage of such queries (which perhaps composed the chief festivity of our ancestors by an evening fire) in a volume of very scarce tracts, preserved in the University Library at Cambridge, D. 5. 2. The innocence of these *Demaundes Joyous* may deserve a praise which is not always due to their delicacy.

STEEVENS.

² If it be not sufficient to say, with Dr. Warburton, that this phrase might be taken from husbandry, without much depth of reading, we may produce it from a dittie of the workmen of Dover, preserved in the additions to Holinshed, p. 1546:

“ My bow is broke, I would *unyoke*,

“ My foot is sore, I can worke no more.” FARMER.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

1. *Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it; for your dull aſs will not mend his pace with beating: and, when you are ask'd this question next, ſay, a grave-maker; the houſes that he makes, laſt till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan, and fetch me a ſtoup of liquor. [*Exit 2. Clown.*]

He digs, and ſings.

*In youth when I did love, did love,³
Methought, it was very ſweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove
O, methought, there was nothing meet.⁴*

Ham. Has this fellow no feeling of his buſineſs? he ſings at grave-making.

Hor. Cuſtom hath made it in him a property of eaſineſs.

Ham.

³ The three ſtanzas, ſung here by the grave-digger, are extracted, with a ſlight variation, from a little poem, called *The aged Lover renounceth Love*, written by Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, who flouriſhed in the reign of king Henry VIII. and who was beheaded 1547, on a ſtrained accusation of treaſon. THEOBALD.

⁴ This paſſage, as it ſtands, is abſolute nonſenſe; but if we read “for aye,” inſtead of “for ah” it will have ſome kind of ſenſe, as it may mean “that it was not meet, though he was in love, to contract himſelf for ever.” M. MASON.

Dr. Percy is of opinion that the different corruptions in theſe ſtanzas, might have been “deſigned by the poet himſelf, the better to paint the character of an illiterate clown.”

Behove is intereſt, convenience. STEEVENS.

— *nothing meet.*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads:

O me thought there a was nothing a meet. MALONE.

The original poem from which this ſtanza is taken, like the other ſucceeding ones, is preſerved among lord Surrey’s poems; though, as Dr. Percy has obſerved, it is attributed to lord Vaux by George Gaſcoigne.

All theſe difficulties however (ſays the Rev. Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry*, Vol. III. p. 45,) are at once adjusted by MS. Harl. 1703, 25, in the Britiſh Muſeum, in which we have a copy of Vaux’s poem, beginning, *I lothe that I did love*, with the title “A dyttie or ſonet made by the lord Vaus, in the time of the noble quene Marye, repreſenting the image of death.”

The entire ſong is published by Dr. Percy, in the firſt volume of his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. STEEVENS.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1. *Clo.* *But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me into the land,
As if I had never been such.*

[Throws up a scull.

Ham. That scull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches;⁵ one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say, *Good-morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?* This might be my lord such-a-one, that prais'd my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so: and now my lady Worm's;⁶ chaplains, and knock'd about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them?⁷ mine ache to think on't.

1. *Clo.*

⁵ The folio reads—*o'er-offices*. STEEVENS.

In the quarto, [1604] for *over-offices* is *over-reaches*, which agrees better with the sentence: it is a strong exaggeration to remark, that an *ass* can *over-reach* him who would once have tried to *circumvent*—. I believe both these words were Shakspeare's. An author in revising his work, when his original ideas have faded from his mind, and new observations have produced new sentiments, easily introduces images which have been more newly impressed upon him, without observing their want of congruity to the general texture of his original design.

JOHNSON.

⁶ The scull that was my lord *Such-a-one's*, is now my lady *Worm's*.

JOHNSON.

⁷ This is a game played in several parts of England even at this time. A stake is fixed into the ground; those who play, throw *loggats* at it, and he that is nearest the stake, wins: I have seen it played in different counties at their sheep-sheering feasts, where the winner was entitled to a black fleece, which he afterwards presented to the farmer's maid to spin for the purpose of making a petticoat, and on condition that she knelt down on the fleece to be killed by all the rusticks present.

It

1. Clo. *A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
For—and a shrouding sheet:
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

[Sings.]

[Throws up a scull.]

Ham. There's another: Why may not that be the scull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quillets,⁸ his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce⁹ with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes,² his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers,³ his recoveries: Is this the fine of his fines, and

It is one of the unlawful games enumerated in the statute of 33 of Henry VIII. STEEVENS.

Loggeting in the fields is mentioned for the first time among other "*new and crafty games and plays,*" in the statute of 33 Henry VIII. c. 9. Not being mentioned in former acts against unlawful games, it was probably not practised long before the statute of Henry the Eighth was made. MALONE.

A *loggat-ground*, like a skittle-ground, is strewed with ashes, but is more extensive. A bowl much larger than the jack of the game of bowls is thrown first. The pins, which I believe are called *loggats*, are much thinner, and lighter at one extremity than the other. The bowl being first thrown, the players take the pins up by the thinner and lighter end, and fling them towards the bowl, and in such a manner that the pins may once turn round in the air, and slide with the thinner extremity foremost, towards the bowl. The pins are about one or two-and-twenty inches long. BLOUNT.

⁸ *Quillets* are nice and frivolous distinctions. The word is rendered by Coles in his Latin Dictionary, 1679, *res frivola*. MALONE.

⁹ — *the sconce* —] i. e. the head. STEEVENS.

² By a statute is here meant, not an act of parliament, but a species of security for money, affecting real property; whereby the lands of the debtor are conveyed to the creditor, till out of the rents and profits of them his debt may be satisfied. MALONE.

³ A recovery with *double voucher* is the one usually suffered, and is so denominated from *two* persons (the latter of whom is always the common cryer, or some such inferior person) being successively *vouched*, or called upon, to warrant the tenant's title. Both *fines* and *recoveries* are fictions of law, used to convert an estate tail into a fee simple. *Statutes* are (not acts of parliament, but) *statutes-merchant* and *staple*, particular modes of *recognizance* or acknowledgement for securing debts, which thereby become.

and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more? ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calves-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep, and calves, which seek out assurance in that.⁴ I will speak to this fellow:—Whose grave's this, firrah?

1. Clo. Mine, fir.—

*O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

[Sings.]

Ham. I think it be thine; indeed; for thou liest in't.

1. Clo. You lie out on't, fir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't, and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, and not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

1. Clo. 'Tis a quick lie, fir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

1. Clo. For no man, fir.

Ham. What woman then?

1. Clo. For none neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't?

1. Clo. One, that was a woman, fir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card,⁵ or equivocation will undo us. By the lord, Horatio, these

come a charge upon the party's land. *Statutes and recognizances* are constantly mentioned together in the covenants of a purchase deed.

RITSON.

⁴ A quibble is intended. Deeds, which are usually written on parchment, are called the common *assurances* of the kingdom. MALONE.

⁵ The *card* is the paper on which the different points of the compass were described. *To do any thing by the card*, is, *to do it with nice observation*.

JOHNSON.

The

these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked,⁶ that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.—How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

1. *Clo.* Of all the days i'the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long's that since?

1. *Clo.* Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: It was

The *card* is a *sea-chart*, still so termed by mariners: and the word is afterwards used by Osrick in the same sense. Hamlet's meaning will therefore be, we must speak *directly forward in a straight line*, plainly to the point. RITSON.

We must speak with the same precision and accuracy as is observed in making the true distances of coasts, the heights, courses, &c. in a *sea-chart*, which in our poet's time was called a *card*. In 1539 was published in 4to. *A briefe Discourse of Mappes and Cardes, and of their Uses*.—The “shipman's *card*” in *Macbeth*, is the paper on which the different points of the compass are described. MALONE.

In every ancient *sea-chart* that I have seen, the compass, &c. was likewise introduced. STEEVENS.

⁶ So *smart*, so *sharp*, says Sir T. Hanmer, very properly; but there was, I think, about that time, a *picked shoe*, that is, a *shoe with a long pointed toe*, in fashion, to which the allusion seems likewise to be made. *Every man now is smart; and every man now is a man of fashion.*

JOHNSON.

This fashion of wearing shoes with long pointed toes was carried to such excess in England, that it was restrained at last by proclamation so long ago as the fifth year of Edward IV. when it was ordered, “that the beaks or pykes of shoes and boots should not pass two inches, upon pain of cursing by the clergy, and forfeiting twenty shillings, to be paid, one noble to the king, another to the cordwainers of London, and the third to the chamber of London;—and for other countries and towns the like order was taken.—Before this time, and since the year 1482, the pykes of shoes and boots were of such length, that they were fain to be tied up to the knee with chains of silver, and gilt, or at least silken laces.”

STEEVENS.

i. e. so spruce, so quaint, so affected.

There is, I think, no allusion to *picked* or pointed shoes, as has been supposed. *Picked* was a common word of Shakspeare's age, in the sense above given, and is found in Minsheu's Dictionary, 1617, with its original signification: “*Trimm'd* or drest sprucely.” It is here used metaphorically. MALONE.

I should have concurred with Mr. Malone in giving a general sense to the epithet—*picked*, but for Hamlet's mention of the *toe* of the peasant, &c.

STEEVENS.

was that very day that young Hamlet was born :⁷ he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England ?

1. Clo. Why, because he was mad : he shall recover his wits there ; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

Ham. Why ?

1. Clo. 'Twill not be seen in him there ; there the men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad ?

1. Clo. Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely ?

1. Clo. 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground ?

1. Clo. Why, herein Denmark ; I have been sexton here, man, and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i'the earth ere he rot ?

1. Clo. 'Faith, if he be not rotten before he die, (as we have many pocky corfes now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in,) he will last you some eight year, or nine year : a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another ?

1. Clo. Why, fir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while ; and your water is a fore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a scull now hath lain you i'the earth three-and-twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it ?

1. Clo. A whoreson mad fellow's it was ; Whose do you think it was ?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

1. Clo. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue ! he pour'd a flaggon of Rhenish on my head once. This same scull, fir, was Yorick's scull, the king's jester.

Ham. This ?

[Takes the scull.]

1. Clo. E'en that.

Ham.

⁷ By this scene it appears that Hamlet was then thirty years o'd, and knew Yorick well, who had been dead twenty-two years. And yet in the beginning of the play he is spoken of as a *very young* man, one that designed to go back to school, i. e. to the university of Wittenberg. The poet in the fifth act had forgot what he wrote in the first.

BLACKSTONE.

Ham. Alas, poor Yorick!—I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorr'd in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips, that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber,⁸ and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour⁹ she must come; make her laugh at that.—Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord?

Ham. Dost thou think, Alexander look'd o'this fashion i'the earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah! [Throws down the scull.

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: As thus; Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam: And why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar,² dead, and turn'd to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,

Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!³

But soft! but soft! aside;—Here comes the king,

Enter

⁸ Thus the folio. The quartos read—my lady's *table*, meaning, I suppose, her *dressing-table*. STEEVENS.

⁹ i. e. to this countenance or complexion. MALONE.

² Thus the quarto, 1604. The editor of the folio substituted *imperial*, not knowing that *imperious* was used in the same sense. There are other instances in the folio of a familiar term being substituted in the room of a more ancient word. MALONE.

³ Winter's *blast*. JOHNSON.

A *flaw* meant a sudden gust of wind. So, in Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: "Groppe, a *flaw*, or berrie of wind." MALONE.

Enter Priests, &c. in procession; the corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following it; King, Queen, their Trains, &c.

The queen, the courtiers: Who is this they follow?
And with such maimed rites!⁴ This doth betoken,
The corse, they follow, did with desperate hand
Fordo⁵ its own life. 'Twas of some estate:⁶

Couch we a while, and mark. [*Retiring with HORATIO.*

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham.

That is Laertes,

A very noble youth: Mark.

Laer. What ceremony else?

*1. Priest.*⁷ Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warranty:⁸ Her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'erflows the order,
She should in ground un sanctify'd have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards,⁹ flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her:
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,²

Her

⁴ Imperfect obsequies. JOHNSON.

⁵ To *fordo* is to undo, to destroy. STEEVENS.

⁶ Some person of high rank. JOHNSON.

⁷ This *Priest* in the old quarto is called *Doctor*. STEEVENS.

⁸ Is there any allusion here to the coroner's warrant, directed to the minister and church-wardens of a parish, and permitting the body of a person, who comes to an untimely end, to receive christian burial?

WHALLEY.

⁹ i. e. broken pots or tiles, called *pot-sberds*, *tile-sberds*. So, in *Job*, ii. 8: "And he took him a *potsherd*, (i. e. a piece of a broken pot,) to scrape himself withal." RITSON.

² Evidently corrupted from *chants*, which is the true word. A *specific* rather than a *generic* term being here required to answer to *maiden strewments*. WARBURTON.

For this unusual word the editor of the first folio substituted *rites*. By a more attentive examination and comparison of the quarto copies and the folio, Dr. Johnson, I have no doubt, would have been convinced that this and many other changes in the folio were not made by Shakspeare, as is suggested in the following note. MALONE.

I have been informed by an anonymous correspondent, that *crants* is the German word for *garlands*, and I suppose it was retained by us from the Saxons. To carry *garlands* before the bier of a maiden, and to hang them over her grave, is still the practice in rural parishes.

Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.³

Laer. Must there no more be done?

1. Priest.

No more be done!

We should profane the service of the dead,
To sing a *requiem*,⁴ and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

Laer.

Lay her i'the earth;—

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring!—I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

Ham.

What, the fair Ophelia!

Queen. Sweets to the sweet: Farewell!

[*Scattering flowers.*

I hop'd, thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought, thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.

Laer.

O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Depriv'd thee of!—Hold off the earth a while,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

[*Leaps into the grave.*

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead;
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
To o'er-top old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

Ham.

Crants therefore was the original word, which the author, discovering it to be provincial, and perhaps not understood, changed to a term more intelligible, but less proper. *Maiden rites* give no certain or definite image. He might have put *maiden wreaths*, or *maiden garlands*, but he perhaps bestowed no thought upon it; and neither genius nor practice will always supply a hasty writer with the most proper diction.

JOHNSON.

In Minshew's Dictionary, see *Beades*, where *roosen krants* means *sertum rosarium*; and such is the name of a character in this play. TOLLET.

³ *Burial*, here signifies interment in consecrated ground.

WARBURTON.

⁴ A *requiem*, is a mass performed in Popish churches for the rest of the soul of a person deceased. The folio reads—sing *sage requiem*.

STEEVENS.

Ham. [*Advancing.*] What is he, whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

[*Leaps into the grave.*

Laer. The devil take thy soul!

[*Grappling with him.*

Ham. Thou pray'st not well.
I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenetic and rash,
Yet have I in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear: Hold off thy hand.

King. Pluck them afunder.

Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet!

All. Gentlemen,——

Hor. Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

Queen. O my son! what theme?

Ham. I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum.—What wilt thou do for her?

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him.

Ham. 'Zounds, show me what thou'lt do:
Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't tear thyself?
Woul't drink up Eisel?⁵ eat a crocodile?

I'll

⁵ This word has through all the editions been distinguished by Italick characters, as if it were the proper name of some river; and so, I dare say, all the editors have from time to time understood it to be. But then this must be some river in Denmark; and there is none there so called; nor is there any near it in name, that I know of but *Yssel*, from which the province of Overijssel derives its title in the German Flanders. Besides, Hamlet is not proposing any impossibilities to Laertes, as the drinking up a river would be: but he rather seems to mean,—Wilt thou resolve to do things the most shocking and distasteful to human nature; and, behold, I am as resolute. I am persuaded the poet wrote:

Wilt drink up Eisel? eat a crocodile?

i. e. Wilt thou swallow down large draughts of vinegar? The proposition, indeed, is not very grand: but the doing it might be as distasteful and un-

I'll do't.—Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be

favoury as eating the flesh of a *crocodile*. And now there is neither an impossibility, nor an anticlimax: and the lowness of the idea is in some measure removed by the uncommon term. THEOBALD.

Sir T. Hanmer has,

Wilt drink up Nile? or eat a crocodile?

Hamlet certainly meant (for he says he will rant) to dare Laertes to attempt any thing, however difficult or unnatural; and might safely promise to follow the example his antagonist was to set, in draining the channel of a river, or trying his teeth on an animal whose scales are supposed to be impenetrable. Had Shakspeare meant to make Hamlet say—*Wilt thou drink vinegar?* he probably would not have used the term *drink up*; which means, *totally to exhaust*; neither is that challenge very magnificent, which only provokes an adversary to hazard a fit of the heart-burn or the colick.

The commentator's *Yffell* would serve Hamlet's turn or mine. This river is twice mentioned by Stowe, p. 735: "It standeth a good distance from the river *Iffell*, but hath a sponce on *Iffell* of incredible strength."

But in an old Latin account of Denmark and the neighbouring provinces, I find the names of several rivers little differing from *Efil*, or *Eisill*, in spelling or pronunciation. Such are the *Effa*, the *Oefil*, and some others. The word, like many more, may indeed be irrecoverably corrupted; but, I must add, that few authors later than Chaucer or Skelton make use of *eysel* for *vinegar*: nor has Shakspeare employed it in any other of his plays. The poet might have written the *Weisel*, a considerable river which falls into the Baltic ocean, and could not be unknown to any prince of Denmark. STEEVENS.

The quarto, 1604, has *efil*. In the folio the word is spelt *efile*. *Eisil* or *eisel* is *venegar*. The word is used by Chaucer, and by Sir Thomas More.

Mr. Steevens supposes, that a river was meant, either the *Yffel*, or *Oefil*, or *Weisel*, a considerable river which falls into the Baltick ocean. The words, *drink up*, he considers as favourable to his notion. "Had Shakspeare, (he observes,) meant to make Hamlet say, *Wilt thou drink vinegar?* he probably would not have used the term *drink up*, which means, *totally to exhaust*. In *King Richard II.* Act II. sc. ii. (he adds) a thought in part the same occurs:

"—— the task he undertakes,

"Is numb'ring sands, and *drinking oceans dry*."

But I must remark, in that passage evidently *impossibilities* are pointed out. Hamlet is only talking of difficult or painful exertions. Every man can weep, fight, fast, tear himself, drink a potion of vinegar, and eat a piece of a dissected crocodile, however disagreeable; for I have no doubt that

the

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:
 And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
 Millions of acres on us; till our ground,
 Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
 Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
 I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen. This is mere madness:
 And thus awhile the fit will work on him;
 Anon, as patient as the female dove,
 When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,
 His silence will fit drooping.

Ham. Hear you, fir;
 What is the reason that you use me thus?

I lov'd

the poet uses the words *eat a crocodile*, for *eat of a crocodile*. We yet use the same phraseology in familiar language.

On the phrase *drink up* no stress can be laid, for our poet has employed the same expression in his 114th Sonnet, without any idea of *entirely exhausting*, and merely as synonymous to *drink*.

In Shakspeare's time, as at present, to *drink up*, often meant no more than simply to drink. In like manner we sometimes say, "when you have *swallow'd down* this potion," though we mean no more than—"when you have swallow'd this potion." MALONE.

Mr. Malone's strictures are undoubtedly acute, and though not, in my own opinion, decisive, may still be just. Yet as I cannot reconcile myself to the idea of a prince's challenging a nobleman to drink what Mrs. Quickly has called "a mess of vinegar," I have neither changed our former text, nor withdrawn my original remarks on it, notwithstanding they are almost recapitulated in those of my opponent.—On the score of such redundancy, however, I both need and solicit the indulgence of the reader. STEEVENS.

⁶ To *disclose* was anciently used for to *hatch*. So, in *The Booke of Huntynge, Hawkyng, Fyshyng, &c.* bl. l. no date: "First they ben eges; and after they ben *disclosed*, haukes; and commonly goshaukes ben *disclosed* as sone as the choughes." To *exclude* is the technical term at present. During three days after the pigeon has *hatched* her *couplets*, (for she lays no more than *two* eggs,) she never quits her nest, except for a few moments in quest of a little food for herself; as all her young require in that early state, is to be kept warm, an office which she never entrusts to the male. STEEVENS.

The young nestlings of the pigeon, when first *disclosed*, are callow, only covered with a yellow down: and for that reason stand in need of being cherished by the warmth of the hen, to protect them from the chillness of the ambient air, for a considerable time after they are hatched.

HEATH.

I lov'd you ever: But it is no matter;
 Let Hercules himself do what he may,
 The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [Exit.]

King. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.—
[Exit HORATIO.]

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
[To LAERTES:]

We'll put the matter to the present push.—
 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.—
 This grave shall have a living monument:
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
 Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [Exeunt.]

S C E N E II.

A Hall in the Castle.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. So much for this, fir: now shall you see the other;—
 You do remember all the circumstance?

Hor. Remember it, my lord!

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
 That would not let me sleep;⁷ methought, I lay

Worse

⁷ *The Hystorie of Hamblet*, bl. 1et. furnished our author with the scheme of sending the Prince to England, and with most of the circumstances described in this scene:

[After the death of Polonius] “Fengon [the king in the present play] could not content himselfe, but still his mind gave him that the foole [Hamlet] would play him some trick of legerdemaine. And in that conceit, seeking to bee rid of him, determined to find the meanes to doe it by the aid of a stranger, making the king of England minister of his massacrous resolution; to whom he purposed to send him, and by letters desire him to put him to death.

“Now to beare him company, were assigned two of Fengon's faithful ministers, bearing letters ingraved in wood, that contained Hamlet's death, in such sort as he had advertised the king of England. But the subtil Danish prince, (being at sea,) whilst his companions slept, having read the letters, and knowing his uncle's great treason, with the wicked and villainous mindes of the two courtiers that led him to the slaughter, raced out the letters that concerned his death, and instead thereof graved others, with commission to the king of England to hang his two com-
panions

Worse than the mutines in the bilboes.⁸ Rashly,
And prais'd be rashness for it,—Let us know,

Our

panions; and not content to turn the death they had devised against him, upon their own necks, wrote further, that king Fengon wiled him to give his daughter to Hamlet in marriage." *Hyst. of Hamlet*, signat. G 2.

From this narrative it appears that the faithful ministers of Fengon were not unacquainted with the import of the letters they bore. Shakspeare, who has followed the story pretty closely, probably meant to describe their representatives, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as equally guilty; as confederating with the king to deprive Hamlet of his life. So that his procuring their execution, though certainly not absolutely necessary to his own safety, does not appear to have been a wanton and unprovoked cruelty, as Mr. Steevens has supposed in his very ingenious observations on the general character and conduct of the prince throughout this piece.

In the conclusion of his drama the poet has entirely deviated from the fabulous history, which in other places he has frequently followed.

After Hamlet's arrival in England, (for no sea-fight is mentioned,) "the king, (says *The History of Hamlet*) admiring the young prince,—gave him his daughter in marriage, according to the counterfeit letters by him devised; and the next day caused the two servants of Fengon to be executed, to satisfy, as he thought, the king's desire." *Hyst. of Hamb.* Ibid.

Hamlet, however, returned to Denmark, without marrying the king of England's daughter, who, it should seem, had only been betrothed to him. When he arrived in his native country, he made the courtiers drunk, and having burnt them to death, by setting fire to the banqueting-room wherein they sat, he went into Fengon's chamber, and killed him, "giving him (says the relater) such a violent blowe upon the chine of the neck, that he cut his head clean from the shoulders." *Ibid.* signat. F 3.

He is afterwards said to have been crowned king of Denmark.

MALONE.

I apprehend that a critick and a juryman are bound to form their opinions on what they see and hear in the cause before them, and not to be influenced by extraneous particulars unsupported by legal evidence in open court. I persist in observing that from Shakspeare's drama no proofs of the guilt of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern can be collected. They may be convicted by the black letter history; but if the tragedy forbears to criminate, it has no right to sentence them. This is sufficient for the commentator's purpose. It is not his office to interpret the plays of Shakspeare according to the novels on which they are founded, novels which the poet sometimes followed, but as often materially deserted. Perhaps he never confined himself strictly to the plan of any one of his originals. His negligence of poetick justice is notorious; nor can we expect

Our indiscretion sometime serves us well,
 When⁹ our deep plots do pall : and that should teach us,
 There's

expect that he who was content to sacrifice the pious Ophelia, should have been more scrupulous about the worthless lives of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Therefore, I still assert, that, in the tragedy before us, their deaths appear both wanton and unprovoked ; and the crit ck, like Bayes, must have recourse to somewhat *long before the beginning of this play*, to justify the conduct of its hero. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Mutines*, the French word for seditious or disobedient fellows in the army or fleet. *Bilboes*, the ship's prison. JOHNSON.

To *mutine* was formerly used for to *mutiny*. MALONE.

The *bilboes* is a bar of iron with fetters annexed to it, by which mutinous or disorderly sailors were anciently linked together. The word is derived from *Bilboa*, a place in Spain where instruments of steel were fabricated in the utmost perfection. To understand Shakspeare's allusion completely, it should be known, that as these fetters connect the legs of the offenders very close together, their attempts to rest must be as fruitless as those of Hamlet, in whose mind *there was a kind of fighting that would not let him sleep*. Every motion of one must disturb his partner in confinement. The *bilboes* are still shown in the Tower of London, among the other spoils of the Spanish Armada. The following is the figure of them :



STEEVENS.

⁹ Hamlet, delivering an account of his escape, begins with saying—That he *rashly*——and then is carried into a reflection upon the weakness of human wisdom. I *rashly*——praised be rashness for it——*Let us not think these events casual, but let us know, that is, take notice and remember, that we sometimes succeed by indiscretion, when we fail by deep plots, and infer the perpetual superintendence and agency of the Divinity.* The observation is just, and will be allowed by every human being who shall reflect on the course of his own life. JOHNSON.

This passage, I think, should be thus distributed :

—————*Rashly*
 (And prais'd be rashness, for it lets us know,
 Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
 When our deep plots do fail ; and should teach us,

There's

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.²

Hor. That is most certain.

Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them: had my desire;
Finger'd their packet; and, in fine, withdrew
To mine own room again: making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,
A royal knavery; an exact command,—
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,³
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,—⁴
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,⁵

No,

*There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will;—*

Hor. That is most certain.)

Ham. Up from my cabin, &c.

So that *rashly* may be joined in construction with—in the dark grop'd I—to find out them. TYRWHITT.

² Dr. Farmer informs me, that these words are merely technical. A wool-man, butcher, and dealer in *skewers*, lately observed to him that his nephew, (an idle lad) could only *assist* him in making them; “—he could *rough-hew* them, but I was obliged to *shape their ends*.” Whoever recollects the profession of Shakspeare's father, will admit that his son might be no stranger to such a term. I have frequently seen packages of wool pinn'd up with *skewers*. STEEVENS.

³ I am afraid here is a very poor conceit, founded on an equivocation between *reasons* and *raisins*, which in Shakspeare's time were undoubtedly pronounced alike. *Sorts of raisins, sugars, &c.* is the common phraseology of shops.—We have the same quibble in another play. MALONE.

I suspect no quibble or conceit in these words of Hamlet. In one of Ophelia's songs a similar phrase has already occurred: “*Larded all with sweet flowers*.” To *lard* any thing with *raisins*, however, was a practice unknown to ancient cookery. STEEVENS.

⁴ With *such causes of terror*, rising from my character and designs.

JOHNSON.

A *bug* was no less a terrifick being than a goblin.

We call it at present a *bugbear*. STEEVENS.

⁵ *Bated*, for *allowed*. To *abate*, signifies to *deduct*; this deduction, when applied to the person in whose favour it is made, is called an *allowance*. Hence he takes the liberty of using *bated* for *allowed*.

WARBURTON.

No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

Hor. Is't possible?

Ham. Here's the commission; read it at more leisure,
But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

Hor. Ay, 'beseech you.

Ham. Being thus benetted round with villanies,
Or ⁶ I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play; ⁷—I sat me down;
Devis'd a new commission; wrote it fair;
I once did hold it, as our statists do, ⁸
A baseness to write fair, ⁹ and labour'd much
How to forget that learning; but, fir, now
It did me yeoman's service: ² Wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote?

Hor. Ay, good my lord.

Ham.

No leisure bated—means, without any *abatement* or intermission of time. —MALONE.

⁶ Or in old English signified *before*. MALONE.

⁷ Hamlet is telling how luckily every thing fell out; he groped out their commission in the dark without waking them; he found himself doomed to immediate destruction. Something was to be done for his preservation. An expedient occurred, not produced by the comparison of one method with another, or by a regular deduction of consequences, but before he *could make a prologue to his brains, they had begun the play*,—Before he could summon his faculties, and propose to himself what should be done, a complete scheme of action presented itself to him. His mind operated before he had excited it. This appears to me to be the meaning. JOHNSON.

⁸ A *statist* is a *statesman*. STEEVENS.

Most of the great men of Shakspeare's time, whose autographs have been preserved, wrote very bad hands; their secretaries very neat ones. BLACKSTONE.

⁹ “I have in my time, (says Montaigne,) seene some, who by writing did earnestly get both their titles and living, to disavow their apprentissage, marre their pen, and affect the ignorance of *so vulgar a qualitie*.” Florio's translation, 1603, p. 125. RITSON.

² The meaning, I believe, is, *This yeomanly qualification was a most useful servant, or yeoman, to me*; i. e. did me eminent service. The ancient yeomen were famous for their military valour. “These were the good archers in times past, (says Sir Thomas Smith,) and the stable troop of footmen that affraide all France.” STEEVENS.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the king,—
 As England was his faithful tributary;
 As love between them like the palm might flourish;³
 As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
 And stand a comma 'tween their amities;⁴
 And many such like as's⁵ of great charge,—
 That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
 Without debatement further, more, or less,

He

³ This comparison is scriptural. “The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree.” “*Psalms* xcii. 11. STEEVENS.

⁴ The expression of our author is, like many of his phrases, sufficiently constrained and affected; but it is not incapable of explanation. The *comma* is the note of *connection* and continuity of sentences; the *period* is the note of *abruption* and disjunction. Shakspeare had it perhaps in his mind to write,—That unless England complied with the mandate, *war should put a period to their amity*; he altered his mode of diction, and thought that, in an opposite sense, he might put, that *peace should stand a comma between their amities*. This is not an easy stile; but is it not the stile of Shakspeare? JOHNSON.

⁵ *Asses* heavily loaded. A quibble is intended between *as* the conditional particle, and *ass* the beast of burthen. That *charg'd* anciently signified *loaded*, may be proved from the following passage in *The Widow's Tears*, by Chapman, 1612:

“Thou must be the *ass* *charg'd* with crowns to make way.”

JOHNSON.

Shakspeare has so many quibbles of his own to answer for, that there are those who think it hard he should be charged with others which perhaps he never thought of. STEEVENS.

Though the first and obvious meaning of these words certainly is, “*many similar* adjurations, or monitory injunctions, *of great weight and importance*,” yet Dr. Johnson's notion of a quibble being also in the poet's thoughts, is supported by two other passages of Shakspeare, in which *asses* are introduced as usually employed in the carriage of gold, a *charge* of no small weight:

“He shall but bear them, as the *ass* bears gold,

“To groan and sweat under the business.”

Julius Cæsar.

In further support of his observation, it should be remembered, that the letter *s* in the particle *as* in the midland counties is usually pronounced hard, as in the pronoun *us*. Dr. Johnson himself always pronounced the particle *as* hard, and so I have no doubt did Shakspeare. It is so pronounced in Warwickshire at this day. The first folio accordingly has—*assis*. MALONE.

He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not thriving-time allow'd.⁵

Hor. How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant;
I had my farther's signet in my purse,
Which was the model⁶ of that Danish seal:
Folded the writ up in form of the other;
Subscrib'd it; gave't the impression; plac'd it safely,
The changeling⁷ never known: Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow:⁸
'Tis dangerous, when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Hor. Why, what a king is this!

Ham. Does it not, think thee,⁹ stand me now upon?
He that hath kill'd my king, and whor'd my mother;
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes;
Thrown out his angle² for my proper life,
And with such cozenage; is't not perfect conscience,
To quit him³ with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?

Hor.

⁵ i. e. without time for confession of their sins: another proof of Hamlet's christian-like disposition. STEEVENS.

⁶ The *model* is in old language the *copy*. The signet was formed in imitation of the Danish seal. MALONE.

⁷ A *changeling* is a *child* which the fairies are supposed to leave in the room of that which they steal. JOHNSON.

⁸ *Insinuation*, for corruptly obtruding themselves into his service.

WARBURTON.

By their having insinuated or thrust themselves into the employment.

MALONE.

⁹ i. e. bethink thee. MALONE.

² An *angle* in Shakspeare's time signified a fishing-rod. MALONE.

³ To requite him; to pay him his due. JOHNSON.

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England,
What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short: the interim is mine;
And a man's life's no more than to say, one.
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his: I'll count his favours: 4
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Hor. Peace; who comes here?

Enter OSRICK.

Osr. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir.—Dost know this water-fly? 5

Hor. No, my good lord.

Ham. Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to
know him: he hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be
lord

4 Thus the folio. Mr. Rowe first made the alteration, which is perhaps unnecessary. I'll count his favours may mean, — I will make account of them, i. e. reckon upon them, value them. STEEVENS.

What favours has Hamlet received from Laertes, that he was to make account of?—I have no doubt but we should read,

——I'll court his favour. M. MASON.

Mr. Rowe for count very plausibly reads court. MALONE.

Hamlet may refer to former civilities of Laertes, and weigh them against his late intemperance of behaviour; or may count on such kindness as he expected to receive in consequence of a meditated reconciliation. STEEVENS.

5 A water-fly skips up and down upon the surface of the water, without any apparent purpose of reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler. JOHNSON.

Water-fly is in *Troilus and Cressida* used as a term of reproach, for contemptible from smallness of size. “How (says Therfites) the poor world is pestered with such water-flies: diminutives of nature.” Water-flies are gnats. This insect in Chaucer denotes a thing of no value. *Canterbury Tales*, v. 17203, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edition:

“Not worth to thee as in comparison

“The mountance [value] of a gnat.” HOLT WHITE.

lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 'tis a chough;⁶ but as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Ofr. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit: your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

Ofr. I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

Ofr. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet, methinks, it is very sultry and hot;⁷ or my complexion—

Ofr. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,—as 'twere,—I cannot tell how.—My lord, his majesty bade me signify to you, that he has laid a great wager on your head: Sir, this is the matter,——

Ham. I beseech you, remember⁸—

[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.

Ofr. Nay, good my lord: for my ease, in good faith.⁹ Sir, here is newly come to court, Laertes: believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences,² of very soft society, and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry,³ for you shall find

⁶ A kind of jackdaw. JOHNSON.

⁷ Hamlet is here playing over the same farce with Ofrick, which he had formerly done with Polonius. STEEVENS.

⁸ “Remember not your courtesy,” I believe, Hamlet would have said, if he had not been interrupted. “Remember thy courtesy,” he could not possibly have said. MALONE.

⁹ This seems to have been the affected phrase of the time. Thus, in Marston's *Malcontent*, 1604: “I beseech you, sir, be covered.—No, in good faith for my ease.” And in other places. FARMER.

It appears to have been the common language of ceremony in our author's time. “Why do you stand bareheaded?” (says one of the speakers in Florio's *SECOND FRUTES*, 1591.) you do yourself wrong. Pardon me, good sir, (replies his friend;) I do it for my ease.” MALONE.

² Full of distinguishing excellencies, JOHNSON.

³ The general preceptor of elegance; the card by which a gentleman is

find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.⁴

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you;⁵—though, I know, to divide him inventorially, would dizzy the arithmetick of memory; and yet but raw neither,⁶ in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article;⁷ and his infusion of such dearth⁸ and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirrour; and, who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Ofr. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, fir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

Ofr. Sir?

Hor. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, fir, really.⁹

Ham.

is to direct his course; the *calendar* by which he is to choose his time, that what he does may be both excellent and seasonable. JOHNSON.

⁴ *You shall find him containing* and comprising every *quality* which a gentleman would desire to *contemplate* for imitation. I know not but it should be read, *You shall find him the continent.* JOHNSON.

⁵ This is designed as a specimen, and ridicule of the court-jargon amongst the *precieux* of that time. The sense in English is, “Sir, he suffers nothing in your account of him, though to enumerate his good qualities particularly would be endless; yet when we had done our best, it would still come short of him. However, in strictness of truth, he is a great genius, and of a character so rarely to be met with, that to find any thing like him we must look into his mirrour, and his imitators will appear no more than his shadows.” WARBURTON.

⁶ — We should read—*flow.* WARBURTON.

I believe *raw* to be the right word; it is a word of great latitude; *raw* signifies *unripe*, *immature*, thence *unformed*, *imperfect*, *unskilful*. The best account of him would be *imperfect*, in respect of his quick sail. The phrase *quick sail* was, I suppose, a proverbial term for *activity of mind.* JOHNSON.

⁷ This is obscure. I once thought it might have been, *a soul of great altitude*; but, I suppose, *a soul of great article*, means *a soul of large comprehension*, of many contents; the particulars of an inventory are called *articles.* JOHNSON.

⁸ *Dearth* is *deariness*, value, price. And his internal qualities of such value and rarity. JOHNSON.

⁹ Of this interrogatory remark the sense is very obscure. The question may mean, *Might not all this be understood in plainer language?* But

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Ofr. Of Laertes?

Hor. His purse is empty already; all his golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, fir.

Ofr. I know, you are not ignorant—

Ham. I would you did, fir; yet, in faith if you did, it would not much approve me; ⁹—Well, fir.

Ofr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; ² but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

Ofr. I mean, fir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed³ he's unfellow'd.

Ham.

But then, *you will do it, fir, really*, seems to have no use, for who could doubt but plain language would be intelligible? I would therefore read, *Is't possible* not to be understood in a *mother tongue*? *You will do it, fir, really.* JOHNSON.

Suppose we were to point the passage thus: “*Is't not possible to understand? In another tongue you will do it, fir, really.*”

The speech seems to be addressed to *Ofrick*, who is puzzled by Hamlet's imitation of his own affected language. STEEVENS.

Theobald has silently substituted *rarely* for *really*. I think Horatio's speech is addressed to Hamlet. *Another tongue* does not mean as I conceive, *plainer language*, (as Dr. Johnson supposed,) but “*language so fantastical and affected as to have the appearance of a foreign tongue:*” and in the following words Horatio, I think, means to praise Hamlet for imitating this kind of babble so happily. I suspect, however, that the poet wrote—*Is't possible not to understand in a mother tongue?*

Since this note was written, I have found the very same error in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, 4to. 1605, B. II. p. 60: “—the art of grammar, whereof the use in *another tongue* is small, in a *foreign tongue* more.” The author in his table of Errata says, it should have been printed—in *mother tongue*. MALONE.

⁹ If you knew I was not ignorant, your esteem would not much advance my reputation. To *approve*, is to *recommend to approbation*.

JOHNSON.

² I dare not pretend to know him, lest I should pretend to an equality: no man can completely know another, but by knowing himself, which is the utmost extent of human wisdom. JOHNSON.

³ In his excellence. JOHNSON.

Ham. What's his weapon?

Ofr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons: but, well.

Ofr. The king, sir, hath wager'd with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has impawn'd,⁴ as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers,⁵ and so: Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hor. I knew, you must be edified by the margent,⁶ ere you had done.

Ofr.

⁴ — Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—*impon'd*. *Pignare* in Italian signifies both to *pawn*, and to lay a wager. MALONE.

Perhaps it should be, *depon'd*. So *Hudibras*.

“I would upon this cause *depone*,

“As much as any I have known.”

But perhaps *imponed* is pledged, *impawned*, so spelt to ridicule the affectation of uttering English words with French pronunciation.

JOHNSON.

To *impose* is certainly right, and means to put down, to stake, from the verb *impono*. RITSON.

⁵ Under this term were comprehended four graduated straps, &c. that hung down in a belt on each side of its receptacle for the sword. I write this, with a most gorgeous belt, at least as ancient as the time of James I. before me. It is of crimson velvet embroidered with gold, and had belonged to the Somerset family. STEEVENS.

The word *bangers* has been misunderstood. That part of the girdle or belt by which the sword was suspended, was in our poet's time called *the bangers*. See Minshew's Dictionary, 1617: “*The bangers of a sword. G. Pendants d'espée, L. Subcingulum,*” &c. So, in an inventory found among the papers of Hamlet Clarke, an attorney of a court of record in London in the year 1611, and printed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. LVIII. p. III:

“*Item, One payre of girdle and bangers, of silver purle, and cullored like.*”

“*Item, One payre of girdler and bangers, upon white fattene.*”

The bangers ran in an oblique direction from the middle of the fore-part of the girdle across the left thigh, and were attached to the girdle behind. MALONE.

⁶ Dr. Warburton very properly observes, that in the old books the gloss or comment was usually printed on the margent of the leaf.

STEEVENS.

Ofr. The carriages, fir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more german⁷ to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides; I would, it might be hangers till then. But, on: Six Barbary horses against six French fwords, their assigns, and three liberal conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish: Why is this impawn'd, as you call it?

Ofr. The king, fir, hath lay'd,⁸ that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid, on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How, if I answer, no?

Ofr. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me: let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him, if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame, and the odd hits.

Ofr. Shall I deliver you so?

Ham. To this effect, fir; after what flourish your nature will.

Ofr. I commend my duty to your lordship. [Exit.]

Ham. Yours, yours. — He does well, to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor.

⁷ More *a-kin*. JOHNSON.

⁸ This wager I do not understand. In a dozen passes one must exceed the other more or less than three hits. Nor can I comprehend, how, in a dozen, there can be twelve to nine. The passage is of no importance; it is sufficient that there was a wager. The quarto has the passage as it stands. The folio, — *He hath one twelve for mine.*

JOHNSON.

As three or four complete pages would scarcely hold the remarks already printed, together with those which have lately been communicated to me in MSS. on this very unimportant passage, I shall avoid both partiality and tediousness, by the omission of them all — I therefore leave the conditions of this wager to be adjusted by the members of Brookes's, or the Jockey-Club at Newmarket, who on such subjects may prove the most enlightened commentators, and most successfully bestir themselves in the cold unpoetick dabble of calculation. STEEVENS.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.⁹

Ham. He did comply² with his dug, before he suck'd it. Thus has he (and many³ more of the same breed, that, I know, the drossy age dotes on,) only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter;⁴ a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnow'd opinions;⁵ and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.⁶

Enter

⁹ I see no particular propriety in the image of the lapwing. Ofrick did not run till he had done his business. We may read,—*This lapwing ran away*—That is, *this fellow was full of unimportant bustle from his birth.* JOHNSON.

I believe, Hamlet means to say that Ofrick is, bustling and impetuous, and yet “but raw in respect of his quick sail.” MALONE.

² For *comply* Dr. Warburton and the subsequent editors; read—*compliment*. The verb *to compliment* was not used, as I think, in the time of Shakspeare. MALONE.

I doubt whether any alteration be necessary. Shakspeare seems to have used *comply* in the sense in which we use the verb *compliment*. See before, Act II. sc. ii: “—— let me *comply* with you in this garb.”

TYRWHITT.

³ The first folio has—*and mine more of the same beavy*. The second folio—*and nine more, &c.* Perhaps the last is the true reading.

STEEVENS.

There may be a propriety in *bevy*, as he has just called him a *lapwing*:

TOLLET.

“Many more of the same breed,” is the reading of the quarto, 1604.

MALONE.

⁴ *Outward habit of encounter*, is exterior politeness of address; in allusion to Ofrick's last speech. HENLEY.

⁵ This passage in the quarto stands thus:—“They have got out of the habit of encounter, a kind of misty collection, which carries them through and through the most profane and trennowned opinions.” If this printer preserved any traces of the original, our author wrote, “the most *sane* and *renowned* opinions,” which is better than *fann'd* and *winnow'd*.

The meaning is, “these men have got the cant of the day, a superficial readiness of slight and cursory conversation, a kind of frothy collection of fashionable prattle, which yet carries them through the most select and approving judgements. This airy facility of talk sometimes imposes upon wise men.”

Who has not seen this observation verified? JOHNSON.

Fond

Enter a Lord.

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Ofrick, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know, if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes, they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now, or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The king, and queen, and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The queen desires you, to use some gentle entertainment⁷ to Laertes before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me.

[*Exit Lord.*

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds.⁸
But

Fond is evidently opposed to *winnow'd*. *Fond*, in the language of Shakspeare's age, signified *foolish*.

Winnowed is *sifted*, *examined*. The sense is then, that their conversation was yet successful enough to make them passable not only with the weak, but with those of sounder judgement. The same opposition in terms is visible in the reading which the quartos offer. *Profane* or *vulgar* is opposed to *trenowned*, or *thrice renowned*. STEEVENS.

Fann'd and *winnow'd* seems right to me. Both words *winnowed*, *fand* and *dress*, occur together in Markham's *English Husbandman*, p. 117. TOLLET.

On considering this passage, it always appeared to me that we ought to read, "the most *sound* and *winnowed* opinions:" and I have been confirmed in that conjecture by a passage I lately met with in *Howel's Letters*, where speaking of a man merely contemplative, he says, "Besides he may want judgement in the choice of his authors, and knows not how to turn his hand either in weighing or *winnowing* the *soundest* opinions," Book III. Letter viii. M. MASON.

⁶ These men of show, without solidity, are like bubbles raised from soap and water, which dance, and glitter, and please the eye, but if you extend them, by blowing hard, separate into a mist; so if you oblige these specious talkers to extend their compass of conversation, they at once discover the tenuity of their intellects. JOHNSON.

⁷ Mild and temperate conversation. JOHNSON.

⁸ I shall succeed with the advantage that I am allowed. MALONE.

But thou would'st not think, how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord,—

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving,⁹ as would, perhaps, trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it:² I will forestal their repair hither, and say, you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit, we defy augury; there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes?³ Let be.

Enter

⁹ *Gain-giving* is the same as *misgiving*. STEEVENS.

² With these presages of future evils arising in the mind, the poet has fore-run many events which are to happen at the conclusions of his plays; and sometimes so particularly, that even the circumstances of calamity are minutely hinted at, as in the instance Juliet, who tells her lover from the window, that he appears *like one dead in the bottom of a tomb*. The supposition that the genius of the mind gave an alarm before approaching dissolution, is a very ancient one, and perhaps can never be totally driven out: yet it must be allowed the merit of adding beauty to poetry, however injurious it may sometimes prove to the weak and the superstitious. STEEVENS.

³ The old quarto reads,—*Since no man of ought he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.* This is the true reading. Here the premises conclude right, and the argument drawn out at length is to this effect: “It is true, that, by death, we lose all the goods of life; yet seeing this loss is no otherwise an evil than as we are sensible of it, and since death removes all sense of it, what matters it how soon we lose them? Therefore come what will, I am prepared.” WARBURTON.

The reading of the quarto was right, but in some other copy the harshness of the transposition was softened, and the passage stood thus:—*Since no man knows aught of what he leaves.* For *knows* was printed in the later copies *has*, by a slight blunder in such typographers.

I do not think Dr. Warburton's interpretation of the passage the best that it will admit. The meaning may be this,—*Since no man knows aught of the state of life which he leaves*, since he cannot judge what other years may produce, why should he be afraid of *leaving* life betimes? Why should he dread an early death, of which he cannot tell whether it is an exclusion of happiness, or an interception of calamity? I despise the superstition of augury and omens, which has no ground in reason or piety;

Enter King, Queen, LAERTES, Lords, OSRICK, and Attendants with foils, &c.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.
[*The King puts the hand of LAERTES into that of HAMLET.*]

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir: I have done you wrong:

But pardon it, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,
How I am punish'd with a fore distraction.
What I have done,
That might your nature, honour, and exception,
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never, Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it then? His madness: It't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

Laer.

piety; my comfort is, that I cannot fall but by the direction of Providence.

Sir T. Hanmer has,—*Since no man owes aught, a conjecture not very reprehensible. Since no man can call any possession certain, what is it to leave?* JOHNSON.

Dr. Warburton has truly stated the reading of the first quarto, 1604. The folio reads,—*Since no man has ought of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?*

In the late editions neither copy has been followed. MALONE.

* I wish Hamlet had made some other defence; it is unsuitable to the character of a good or a brave man, to shelter himself in falsehood:

JOHNSON.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,⁵
 Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
 To my revenge; but in my terms of honour,
 I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation,
 Till by some elder masters, of known honour,⁶
 I have a voice and precedent of peace,
 To keep my name ungor'd: But till that time,
 I do receive your offer'd love like love,
 And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely;
 And will this brother's wager frankly play.—
 Give us the foils; come on.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance
 Your skill shall like a star i'the darkest night,
 Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir.

Ham. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osrick.—Cousin
 Hamlet,
 You know the wager?

Ham. Very well, my lord;

Your

⁵ This was a piece of satire on fantastical honour. Though *nature* is satisfied, yet he will ask advice of older men of the sword, whether *artificial honour* ought to be contended with Hamlet's submission.

STEEVENS.

⁶ This is said in allusion to an English custom. I learn from an ancient MS. of which the reader will find a more particular account in a note to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, that in Queen Elizabeth's time there were "four ancient masters of defence," in the city of London. They appear to have been the referees in many affairs of honour, and exacted tribute from all inferior practitioners of the art of fencing, &c.

STEEVENS.

Our poet frequently alludes to English customs, and may have done so here, but I do not believe that gentlemen ever submitted points of honour to persons who exhibited themselves for money as prize-fighters on the publick stage; though they might appeal in certain cases to Raleigh, Essex, or Southampton, who from their high rank, their course of life, and established reputation, might with strict propriety be styled, "elder masters, of known honour." MALONE.

Your grace hath laid the odds o'the weaker side.⁷

King. I do not fear it; I have seen you both:—
But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.⁸

Laer. This is too heavy, let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well: These foils have all a length?
[*They prepare to play.*]

Osfr. Ay, my good lord.

King. Set me the stoups⁹ of wine upon that table:—
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,²

Richer

⁷ When the odds were on the side of Laertes, who was to hit Hamlet twelve times to nine, it was perhaps the author's slip. Sir T. Hammer reads—

Your grace hath laid upon the weaker side. JOHNSON.

I see no reason for altering this passage. Hamlet considers the things *impon'd* by the King, as of more value than those *impon'd* by Laertes; and therefore says, “that he had laid odds on the weaker side.”

M. MASON.

Hamlet either means, that what the king had laid was more valuable than what Laertes staked; or that *the king hath made his bet, an advantage being given to the weaker party.* I believe the first is the true interpretation. In the next line but one the word *odds* certainly means *an advantage given to the party*, but here it may have a different sense. This is not an uncommon practice with our poet. MALONE.

The king had wagered, on Hamlet, *six Barbary horses*, against a few rapiers, poniards, &c. that is, about *twenty* to one. These are the odds here meant. RITSON.

⁸ These odds were *twelve* to *nine* in favour of Hamlet, by Laertes giving him *three*. RITSON.

⁹ A *stoup* is a kind of flaggon. STEEVENS.

Containing somewhat more than two quarts. MALONE.

Stoup is a common word in Scotland at this day, and denotes a pewter vessel, resembling our wine measure; but of no determinate quantity *that* being ascertained by an adjunct, as, *gallon-stoup*, *pint-stoup*, *nutbkin-stoup*, &c. The vessel in which they fetch or keep water is also called the *water-stoup*. A *stoup of wine* is therefore equivalent to a pitcher of wine. RITSON.

² In some editions,

And in the cup an onyx shall he throw.

This

Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn; Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
Now the king drinks to Hamlet.—Come, begin;—
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, fir.

Laer. Come, my lord. [*They play.*

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment.

Ofr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well,—again.

King. Stay, give me drink: Hamlet, this pearl is thine;³
Here's

This is a various reading in several of the old copies; but *union* seems to me to be the true word. If I am not mistaken, neither the *onyx*, nor *sardonyx*, are jewels which ever found place in an imperial crown. An *union* is the finest sort of pearl, and has its place in all crowns, and coronets. Besides, let us consider what the King says on Hamlet's giving Laertes the first hit:

“Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this *pearl* is thine;

“Here's to thy health.”

Therefore, if an *union* be a *pearl*, and an *onyx* a gem, or stone, quite differing in its nature from *pearls*; the king saying, that Hamlet has earn'd the *pearl*, I think, amounts to a demonstration that it was an *union* pearl, which he meant to throw into the cup. THEOBALD.

Thus the folio rightly. In the first quarto by the carelessness of the printer, for *union*, we have *unice*, which in the subsequent quarto copies was made *onyx*. An *union* is a very precious pearl. MALONE.

To swallow a *pearl* in a draught seems to have been equally common to royal and mercantile prodigality. So, in the Second Part of *If you know not Me, you know Nobody*, 1606, Sir Thomas Gresham says:

“Here 16,000 pound at one clap goes.

“Instead of sugar, Gresham *drinks this pearle*

“Unto his queen and mistress.”

It may be observed, however, that *pearls* were supposed to possess an exhilarating quality. STEEVENS.

³ Under pretence of throwing a *pearl* into the cup, the king may be supposed to drop some poisonous drug into the wine. Hamlet seems to suspect this, when he afterwards discovers the effects of the poison, and tauntingly asks him,—“Is the *union* here?” STEEVENS.

Here's to thy health.—Give him the cup.

[*Trumpets sound; and cannon shot off within.*]

Ham. I'll play this bout first, set it by awhile.

Come.—Another hit; What say you? [*They play.*]

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confefs.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath.—⁴

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.⁵

Ham. Good madam,—

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my lord;—I pray you pardon me.

King. It is the poison'd cup; it is too late. [*Aside.*]

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.⁶

Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think it.

Laer. And yet it is almost against my conscience.

[*Aside.*]

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes: You do but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;

I am

⁴ It seems that *John Lowin*, who was the original *Falstaff*, was no less celebrated for his performance of *Henry VIII.* and *Hamlet*. See the *Historia Histrionica*, &c. If he was adapted, by the corpulence of his figure, to appear with propriety in the two former of these characters, Shakspeare might have put this observation into the mouth of her majesty, to apologize for the want of such elegance of person as an audience might expect to meet with in the representative of the youthful prince of Denmark, whom Ophelia speaks of as “the glass of fashion and the mould of form.” This, however, is mere conjecture, as *Joseph Taylor* likewise acted *Hamlet* during the life of Shakspeare.

STEEVENS.

The author of *Historia Histrionica*, and Downes the Prompter, concur in saying, that Taylor was the performer of Hamlet. Roberts the player alone has asserted, (apparently without any authority,) that this part was performed by *L. win.* MALONE.

⁵ i. e. (in humbler language) drinks good luck to you.

STEEVENS.

⁶ These very words (the present repetition of which might have been spared) are addressed by Doll Tearsheet to Falstaff, when he was heated by his pursuit of Pistol. STEEVENS.

I am afeard, you make a wanton of me.⁷

Laer. Say you so? come on. [*They play.*]

Ofr. Nothing neither way.

Laer. Have at you now.

[*LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES.*]

King. Part them, they are incens'd.

Ham. Nay, come again. [*The QUEEN falls.*]

Ofr. Look to the Queen there, ho!

Hor. They bleed on both sides:—How is it, my lord?

Ofr. How is't, Laertes?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to my own springe, Ofrick;
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the queen?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet!—

The drink, the drink;—I am poison'd! [*Dies.*]

Ham. O villainy!—Ho! let the door be lock'd:

Treachery! see it out. [*Laertes falls.*]

Laer. It is here Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good,
In thee there is not half an hour's life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated, and envenom'd: the foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again: Thy mother's poison'd;
I can no more;—the king, the king's to blame.

Ham. The point
Envenom'd too!—Then, venom, to thy work.

[*Stabs the KING.*]

Ofr. and Lords. Treason! treason!

King. O, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

Ham.

⁷ A *wanton* was a man feeble and effeminate. JOHNSON.

Rather, you trifle with me as if you were playing with a child.

RITSON.

A passage in *King John* shows that *wanton* here means a man feeble and effeminate, as Dr. Johnson has explained it. MALONE.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion :—Is the union here?⁸
Follow my mother. [KING dies.

Laer. He is justly serv'd ;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.—
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet :
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee :
Nor thine on me! [Dies.

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio :—Wretched queen, adieu!—
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,⁹
Had I but time, (as this fell sergeant,² death,
Is strict in his arrest,) O, I could tell you,—
But let it be :—Horatio, I am dead ;
'Thou liv'st ; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

Hor. Never believe it ;
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,
Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou'rt a man,—
Give me the cup ; let go ; by heaven, I'll have it.—
O God!—Horatio, what a wounded name,
'Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me ?
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.—

[March afar off, and shot within.

What warlike noise is this?

Os. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

Ham.

⁸ Thus the folio. In a former passage in the quarto, 1604, for *union* we had *unice* ; here it has *onyx*.

It should seem from this line, and Laertes's next speech, that Hamlet here forces the expiring king to drink some of the poisoned cup, and that he dies while it is at his lips. MALONE.

⁹ That are either mere *auditors* of this *catastrophe*, or at most only *mute performers*, that fill the stage without any part in the action. JOHNSON.

² A *sergeant* is a bailiff or sheriff's officer. RITSON.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio ;
 The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirits;³
 I cannot live to hear the news from England :
 But I do prophecy, the election lights
 On Fortinbras ; he has my dying voice ;
 So tell him, with the occurrents,⁴ more and less,
 Which have solicited,⁵—The rest is silence. [Dies.

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart:—Good night, sweet
 prince ;
 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!⁶

Why

³ Alluding, I suppose, to a victorious cock exulting over his conquered antagonist. STEEVENS.

This word, [*o'er-crows*] for which Mr. Pope and succeeding editors have substituted *over-grows*, is used by Holinshed in his *History of Ireland*: “ These noblemen laboured with tooth and nayle to *over-crowe*, and consequently to overthrow, one another.” MALONE.

The accepted reading is the more quaint, the rejected one, the more elegant of the two. STEEVENS.

⁴ i. e. incidents. The word is now disused. STEEVENS.

⁵ *Solicited*, for brought on the event. WARBURTON.

Warburton says that *solicited*, means *brought on the event* ; but that is a meaning the word cannot import. That have *solicited*, means that have *excited* ;—but the sentence is left imperfect. M. MASON.

What Hamlet would have said, the poet has not given us any ground for conjecturing. The words seem to mean no more than—*which have incited me to*—. MALONE.

⁶ The concluding words of the unfortunate Lord Essex's praying on the scaffold were these : “ — and when my life and body shall part, send thy blessed angels, which may receive my soule, and convey it to the joys of heaven.”

Hamlet had certainly been exhibited before the execution of that amiable nobleman ; but the words here given to Horatio might have been one of the many additions made to this play. As no copy of an earlier date than 1604 has yet been discovered, whether Lord Essex's last words were in our author's thoughts, cannot now be ascertained. MALONE.

Let us review for a moment the behaviour of Hamlet, on the strength of which Horatio founds his eulogy, and recommends him to the patronage of angels.

Hamlet, at the command of his father's ghost, undertakes with seeming alacrity to revenge the murder ; and declares he will banish all other thoughts from his mind. He makes, however, but one effort to keep his word, and that is, when he mistakes Polonius for the king. On another occasion, he defers his purpose till he can find an opportunity of taking his uncle when he is least prepared for death, that he may insure

Why does the drum come hither?

[*March within.*

Enter

damnation to his soul. Though he assassinated Polonius by accident, yet he deliberately procures the execution of his school-fellows, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who appear not, from any circumstances in this play, to have been acquainted with the treacherous purposes of the mandate they were employed to carry. To embitter their fate, and hazard their punishment beyond the grave, he denies them even the few moments necessary for a brief confession of their sins. Their end (as he declares in a subsequent conversation with Horatio) gives him no concern, for they obtruded themselves into the service, and he thought he had a right to destroy them. From his brutal conduct toward Ophelia, he is not less accountable for her distraction and death. He interrupts the funeral designed in honour of this lady, at which both the king and queen were present; and, by such an outrage to decency, renders it still more necessary for the usurper to lay a second stratagem for his life, though the first had proved abortive. He insults the brother of the dead, and boasts of an affection for his sister, which, before, he had denied to her face; and yet at this very time must be considered as desirous of supporting the character of a madman, so that the openness of his confession is not to be imputed to him as a virtue. He apologizes to Horatio afterwards for the absurdity of this behaviour, to which, he says, he was provoked by that nobleness of fraternal grief, which, indeed, he ought rather to have applauded than condemned. Dr. Johnson has observed, that to bring about a reconciliation with Laertes, he has availed himself of a dishonest fallacy; and to conclude, it is obvious to the most careless spectator or reader, that he kills the king at last to revenge himself, and not his father.

Hamlet cannot be said to have pursued his ends by very warrantable means; and if the poet, when he sacrificed him at last, meant to have enforced such a moral, it is not the worst that can be deduced from the play; for, as *Maximus*, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Valentinian*, says,

“Although his justice were as white as truth,

“His way was crooked to it; that condemns him.”

The late Dr. Akenfield once observed to me, that the conduct of Hamlet was every way unnatural and indefensible, unless he were to be regarded as a young man whose intellects were in some degree impaired by his own misfortunes; by the death of his father, the loss of expected sovereignty, and a sense of shame resulting from the hasty and incestuous marriage of his mother.

I have dwelt the longer on this subject, because Hamlet seems to have been hitherto regarded as a hero not undeserving the pity of the audience; and because no writer on Shakspeare has taken the pains to point out the immoral tendency of his character. STEEVENS.

Mr. Ritson controverts the justice of Mr. Steevens's strictures on the character of Hamlet, which he undertakes to defend. The arguments he makes use of for this purpose are too long to be here inserted, and therefore

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and Others.

Fort. Where is this fight?

Hor. What is it, you would see?

If

therefore I shall content myself with referring to them. See REMARKS, p. 217, to 224. REED.

Some of the charges here brought against Hamlet appear to me questionable at least, if not unfounded. I have already observed that in the novel on which this play is constructed, the ministers who by the king's order accompanied the young prince to England, and carried with them a packet in which his death was concerted, were apprized of its contents; and therefore we may *presume* that Shakspeare meant to describe their representatives, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as equally criminal; as combining with the king to deprive Hamlet of his life. His procuring their execution therefore does not with certainty appear to have been an unprovoked cruelty, and *might* have been considered by him as necessary to his *future safety*; knowing, as he must have known, that they had devoted themselves to the service of the king in whatever he should command. The principle on which he acted, is ascertained by the following lines, from which also it may be inferred that the poet meant to represent Hamlet's school-fellows as privy to the plot against his life:

“ There's letters seal'd: and my two school-fellows —
 “ Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
 “ They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
 “ And marshall me to knavery: Let it work;
 “ For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer
 “ Hoist with his own petar; and it shall go hard,
 “ But I will delve one yard below *their* mines,
 “ And blow them to the moon.”

Another charge is, that “ *he comes* to disturb the funeral of Ophelia:*” but the fact is otherwise represented in the first scene of the fifth act: for when the funeral procession appears, (which he does not seek, but finds,) he exclaims,

“ The queen, the courtiers: *who is this they follow,*
 “ And with such maimed rites?”

nor does he know it to be the funeral of Ophelia, till Laertes mentions that the dead body was that of his sister.

I do not perceive that he is accountable for the madness of Ophelia. He did not mean to kill her father when concealed behind the arras, but the king; and still less did he intend to deprive her of her reason and her life: her subsequent distraction therefore can no otherwise be laid to his charge, than as an unforeseen consequence from his too ardently pursuing the object recommended to him by his father.

He

* — *he comes* —] The words stood thus in edit. 1778, &c. Steevens.

If aught of woe, or wonder, cease your search.

Fort. This quarry cries on havoc!⁴—O proud death!
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,⁵
That thou so many princes, at a shot,
So bloodily hast struck?

1. Amb. The fight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless, that should give us hearing,
To tell him, his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:
Where should we have our thanks?

Hor. Not from his mouth,⁶
Had it the ability of life to thank you;
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, to jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are

He appears to have been induced to leap into Ophelia's grave, not with a design to insult Laertes, but from his love to her, (which then he had no reason to conceal,) and from the *bravery of her brother's grief*, which excited him (not to condemn that brother, as has been stated, but) to *vie* with him in the expression of affection and sorrow:

“Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
“Until my eyelids will no longer wag.—
“I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
“Could not with all their quantity of love
“Make up my sum.”

When Hamlet says, “the bravery of his grief did put me into a *towering passion*,” I think, he means, into a lofty expression (not of *resentment*, but) of *sorrow*.

I may also add, that he neither assaulted, nor insulted Laertes, till that nobleman had cursed him, and seized him by the throat.

MALONE.

⁴ Sir T. Hanmer reads,

—— cries out, *havock*!

To cry on, was to exclaim against. I suppose, when unfair sportsmen destroyed more quarry or game than was reasonable, the censure was to cry, *Havock*. JOHNSON.

We have the same phraseology in *Othello*, Act V. sc. i:

“—— Whose noise is this, that *cries on* murder?”

See the note there. MALONE.

⁵ Shakspeare has already employed this allusion to the *Choce*, or *feasts of the dead*, which were anciently celebrated at Athens, and are mentioned by Plutarch in the life of *Antoni*us. STEEVENS.

⁶ i. e. the king's. STEEVENS.

Are here arriv'd : give order, that these bodies
 High on a stage be placed to the view ;
 And let me speak, to the yet unknowing world,
 How these things came about : So shall you hear
 Of carnal,⁷ bloody, and unnatural acts ;
 Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters ;
 Of deaths put on⁸ by cunning, and forc'd cause ;
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
 Fall'n on the inventors' heads : all this can I
 Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it,
 And call the noblest to the audience.
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune ;
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,⁹
 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
 And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more :²

But

⁷ *Carnal* is a word used by Shakspeare as an adjective to *carnage*. RITSON.
 Of sanguinary and unnatural acts, to which the perpetrator was instigated by concupiscence, or, to use our poet's own words, by "*carnal stings*." The speaker alludes to the murder of old Hamlet by his brother, previous to his incestuous union with Gertrude. A *Remarker* asks, "was the relationship between the usurper and the deceased king a secret confined to Horatio?"—No, but the *murder* of Hamlet by Claudius was a secret which the young prince had imparted to Horatio, and had imparted to him alone; and to this it is he principally, though covertly, alludes.—*Carnal* is the reading of the only authentick copies, the quarto 1604, and the folio 1623. The modern editors, following a quarto of no authority, for *carnal*, read *cruel*. MALONE.

The edition immediately preceding that of Mr. Malone, reads—*carnal*, and not *cruel*, as here asserted. REED.

⁸ i. e. instigated, produced. MALONE.

⁹ Some rights, which are remembered in this kingdom. MALONE.

² *No* is the reading of the old quartos, but certainly a mistaken one. We say, *a man will no more draw breath*; but that a man's *voice will draw no more*, is, I believe, an expression without any authority. I choose to espouse the reading of the elder folio:

And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more.

And this is the poet's meaning. Hamlet, just before his death, had said :

" But I do prophecy, the election lights

" On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;

" So tell him," &c.

A A 4

Accordingly,

But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance,
On plots, and errors, happen.

Fort.

Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royally: and, for his passage,
The soldiers' musick, and the rites of war,
Speak loudly for him.—

Take up the bodies:—Such a fight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march.*

[*Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which, a peal
of ordnance is shot off.*³

Accordingly, Horatio here delivers that message; and very justly infers, that Hamlet's *voice* will be seconded by others, and procure them in favour of Fortinbras's succession. THEOBALD.

³ If the dramas of Shakspeare were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations; and solemnity not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet caused much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first act chills the blood with horror, to the sop in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the king, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might

might easily be formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shown little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification, which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious.

JOHNSON.

The levity of behaviour which Hamlet assumes immediately after the disappearance of the ghost in the first act, [sc. v.] has been objected to; but the writer of some sensible Remarks on this tragedy, published in 1736, justly observes, that the poet's object there was, that Marcellus "might not imagine that the ghost had revealed to Hamlet some matter of great consequence to him, and that he might not therefore be suspected of any deep design."

"I have heard (adds the same writer,) many persons wonder, why the poet should bring in this ghost in complete armour.—I think these reasons may be given for it. We are to consider, that he could introduce him in these dresses only; in his regal dress, in a habit of interment, in a common habit, or in some fantastick one of his own invention. Now let us examine, which was most likely to affect the spectators with passions proper on the occasion.—

"The regal habit has nothing uncommon in it, nor surprising, nor could it give rise to any fine images. The habit of interment was something too horrible; for terror, not horror, is to be raised in the spectators. The common habit (or *habit de ville*, as the French call it,) was by no means proper for the occasion. It remains then that the poet should choose some habit from his own brain: but this certainly could not be proper, because invention in such a case would be so much in danger of falling into the grotesque, that it was not to be hazarded.

"Now as to the armour, it was very suitable to a king who is described as a great warrior, and is very particular; and consequently affects the spectators without being fantastick.—

"The king spurs on his son to revenge his foul and unnatural murder, from these two considerations chiefly; that he was sent into the other world without having had time to repent of his sins, and without the necessary sacraments, according to the church of Rome, and that consequently his soul was to suffer, if not eternal damnation, at least a long course of penance in purgatory; which aggravates the circumstances of his brother's barbarity; and secondly, that Denmark might not be the scene of usurpation and incest, and the throne thus polluted and profaned. For these reasons he prompts the young prince to revenge; else it would have been more becoming the character of such a prince as Hamlet's father is represented to have been, and more suitable to his present condition, to have left his brother to the divine punishment, and

to a possibility of repentance for his base crime, which, by cutting him off, he must be deprived of.

“ To conform to the ground-work of his plot, Shakspeare makes the young prince feign himself mad. I cannot but think this to be injudicious; for so far from securing himself from any violence which he feared from the usurper, it seems to have been the most likely way of getting himself confined, and consequently debarred from an opportunity of revenging his father's death, which now seemed to be his only aim; and accordingly it was the occasion of his being sent away to England; which design, had it taken effect upon his life, he never could have revenged his father's murder. To speak truth, our poet by keeping too close to the ground-work of his plot, has fallen into an absurdity; for there appears no reason at all in nature, why the young prince did not put the usurper to death as soon as possible, especially as Hamlet is represented as a youth so brave, and so careless of his own life.

“ The case indeed is this. Had Hamlet gone naturally to work, as we could suppose such a prince to do in parallel circumstances, there would have been an end of our play. The poet therefore was obliged to delay his hero's revenge: but then he should have contrived some good reason for it.

“ His beginning his scenes of Hamlet's madness by his behaviour to Ophelia, was judicious, because by this means he might be thought to be mad for her, not that his brain was disturbed about state affairs, which would have been dangerous.

“ It does not appear whether Ophelia's madness was chiefly for her father's death, or for the loss of Hamlet. It is not often that young women run mad for the loss of their fathers. It is more natural to suppose that, like *Chimene*, in the *Cid*, her great sorrow proceeded from her father's being killed by the man she loved, and thereby making it indecent for her ever to marry him.

“ Laertes's character is a very odd one; it is not easy to say whether it is good or bad: but his consenting to the villainous contrivance of the usurper's to murder Hamlet, makes him much more a bad man than a good one.—It is a very nice conduct in the poet to make the usurper build his scheme upon the generous unsuspecting temper of the person he intends to murder, and thus to raise the prince's character by the confession of his enemy; to make the villain ten times more odious from his own mouth. The contrivance of the foil unbated, (i. e. without a button,) is methinks too gross a deceit to go down even with a man of the most unsuspecting nature.

“ Laertes's death and the queen's are truly poetical justice, and very naturally brought about, although I do not conceive it so easy to change rapiers in a scuffle without knowing it at the time. The death of the queen is particularly according to the strictest rules of poetical justice; for she loses her life by the villainy of the very person, who had been the cause of all her crimes.

“ Since the poet deferred so long the usurper's death, we must own that

that he has very naturally effected it, and still added fresh crimes to those the murderer had already committed.

“ Upon Laertes’s repentance for contriving the death of Hamlet, one cannot but feel some sentiments of pity for him; but who can see or read the death of the young prince without melting into tears and compassion? Horatio’s earnest desire to die with the prince, thus not to survive his friend, gives a stronger idea of his friendship for Hamlet in the few lines on that occasion, than many actions or expressions could possibly have done. And Hamlet’s begging him *to draw his breath in this harsh world* a little longer, to clear his reputation, and manifest his innocence, is very suitable to his virtuous character, and the honest regard that all men should have not to be misrepresented to posterity; that they may not set a bad example, when in reality they have set a good one: which is the only motive that can, in reason, recommend the love of fame and glory.

“ Horatio’s desire of having the bodies carried to a stage, &c. is very well imagined, and was the best way of satisfying the request of his deceased friend: and he acts in this, and in all points, suitably to the manly honest character, under which he is drawn throughout the piece. Besides, it gives a sort of content to the audience, that though their favourite (which must be Hamlet) did not escape with life, yet the greatest amends will be made him, which can be in this world, viz. justice done to his memory.

“ Fortinbras comes in very naturally at the close of the play, and lays a very just claim to the throne of Denmark, as he had the dying voice of the prince. He in a few words gives a noble character of Hamlet, and serves to carry off the deceased hero from the stage with the honours due to his birth and merit.” MALONE.

OTHELLO.

O T H E L O

* * The story is taken from *Cynthio's Novels*. POPE.

I have not hitherto met with any translation of this novel (the seventh in the third decad) of so early a date as the age of Shakspeare; but undoubtedly many of those little pamphlets have perished between his time and ours.

It is highly probable that our author met with the name of *Othello* in some tale that has escaped our researches; as I likewise find it in *God's Revenge against Adultery*, standing in one of his arguments as follows: "She marries *Othello*, an old German soldier." This History (the eighth) is professed to be an *Italian* one. Here also occurs the name of *Iago*.

It may indeed be urged that these names were adopted from the tragedy before us: but I trust that every reader who is conversant with the peculiar style and method in which the work of honest John Reynolds is composed, will acquit him of the slightest familiarity with the scenes of Shakspeare.

This play was first entered at Stationers' Hall, Oct. 6, 1621, by Thomas Walkely. STEEVENS.

I have seen a French translation of *Cynthio*, by Gabriel Chappuys, Par. 1584. This is not a faithful one; and I suspect, through this medium the work came into English. FARMER.

This tragedy I have ascribed (but on no very sure ground) to the year 1611. See *An Attempt to ascertain the order of Shakspeare's Plays*.

MALONE.

The time of this play may be ascertained from the following circumstances: Selymus the Second formed his design against Cyprus in 1569, and took it in 1571. This was the only attempt the Turks ever made upon that island after it came into the hands of the Venetians, (which was in the year 1473,) wherefore the time must fall in with some part of that interval. We learn from the play that there was a junction of the Turkish fleet at Rhodes, in order for the invasion of Cyprus, that it first came sailing towards Cyprus, then went to Rhodes, there met another squadron, and then resumed its way to Cyprus. These are real historical facts which happened when Mustaphe, Selymus's general, attacked Cyprus in May 1570, which therefore is the true period of this performance. See *Knolles's Hist. of the Turks*, p. 838, 846, 867. REED.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Duke of Venice.

Brabantio, a Senator.

Two other Senators.

Gratiano, brother to Brabantio.

Lodovico, kinsman to Brabantio.

Othello, the Moor:

Cassio, his Lieutenant;

Iago, his Ancient.

Roderigo, a Venetian Gentleman.

*Montano, Othello's predecessor in the government of Cyprus.**

Clown, servant to Othello.

Herald.

Desdemona, daughter to Brabantio, and wife to Othello.

Emilia, wife to Iago.

Bianca, a courtesan, mistress to Cassio.

*Officers, Gentlemen, Messengers, Musicians, Sailors, Attendants,
&c.*

*SCENE, for the first Act, in Venice; during the rest of the
Play, at a sea-port in Cyprus.*

* Though the rank which Montano held in Cyprus, cannot be exactly ascertained, yet from many circumstances, we are sure he had not the powers with which Othello was subsequently invested.

Perhaps we do not receive any one of the *Personæ Dramatis* to Shakspeare's Plays, as it was originally drawn up by himself. These appendages are wanting to all the quartos, and are very rarely given in the folio. At the end of this play, however, the following enumeration of persons occurs:

“ The names of the actors.—Othello, the Moor.—Brabantio, Father to Desdemona.—Cassio, an Honourable Lieutenant.—Iago, a Villaine.—Roderigo, a gull'd Gentleman.—Duke of Venice.—Senators.—Montano, Governor of Cyprus.—Gentlemen of Cyprus.—Lodovico, and Gratiano, two noble Venetians.—Sailors.—Clowne.—Desdemona, Wife to Othello.—Æmilia, Wife to Iago.—Bianca, a Courtesan.” STEEVENS.

O T H E L L O,

THE MOOR OF VENICE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Venice. *A Street.*

Enter RODERIGO and IAGO.

Rod. Tush, never tell me,² I take it much unkindly,
That thou, Iago,—who hast had my purse,
As if the strings were thine,—should'st know of this.

Iago. 'Sblood, but you will not hear me:³—
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

Rod. Thou told'st me, thou did'st hold him in thy hate.

Iago. Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the
city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Oft capp'd⁴ to him;—and, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,

Evades

² *Tush, never tell me,*] Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio omits the interjection—*Tush*. STEEVENS.

³ *S'blood, but you will not, &c.*] Thus the quarto: the folio suppresses this oath. STEEVENS.

⁴ *To cap* is to salute by taking off the cap. It is still an academic phrase. M. MASON.

Evades them, with a bombast circumstance,⁵
 Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war;
 And, in conclusion, nonfuits
 My mediators; *for, certes,*⁶ says he,
I have already chose my officer.
 And what was he?
 Forsooth, a great arithmetician,⁷
 One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,⁸
 A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;⁹

That

⁵ *Circumstance* signifies *circumlocution*. REED.

⁶ i. e. certainly, in truth. Obsolete. STEEVENS.

⁷ So, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio says: "—— one that fights by the book of *arithmetick*." STEEVENS.

Iago, however, means to represent Cassio, not as a person whose arithmetick was "*one, two, and the third* in your bosom," but as a man merely conversant with *civil* matters, and who knew no more of a squadron than the *number* of men it contained. So afterwards he calls him this *counter-caster*. MALONE.

⁸ It appears from many passages of this play (rightly understood) that Cassio was a Florentine, and Iago a Venetian. HANMER.

⁹ Sir Thomas Hanmer supposed that the text must be corrupt, because it appears from a following part of the play that Cassio was an unmarried man. Mr. Steevens has clearly explained the words in the subsequent note: I have therefore no doubt that the text is right; and have not thought it necessary to insert Mr. Tyrwhitt's note, in which he proposed to read — "*a fellow almost damn'd in a fair life*." Shakspeare, he conceived, might allude to the judgement denounced in the gospel against those of *whom all men speak well*. MALONE.

Mr. Tyrwhitt's conjecture is ingenious, but cannot be right; for the malicious Iago would never have given Cassio the highest commendation that words can convey, at the very time that he wishes to depreciate him to Roderigo: though afterwards, in speaking to himself, [Act V. sc. i.] he gives him his just character. M. MASON.

That Cassio was *married* is not sufficiently implied in the words, *a fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife*, since they may mean, according to Iago's licentious manner of expressing himself, no more than a man *very near being married*. This seems to have been the case in respect of Cassio.—Act IV. sc. i. Iago, speaking to him of Bianca, says,—*Why, the cry goes, that you shall marry her*. Cassio acknowledges that such a report had been raised, and adds, *This is the monkey's own giving out: she is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and self-flattery, not out of my promise*. Iago then, having heard this report before, very naturally circulates it in his present conversation with Roderigo. If Shakspeare, however, designed *Bianca* for a courtesan of *Cyprus*, (where Cassio had not

That never set a squadron in the field,
 Nor the division of a battle knows
 More than a spinster; unless the bookish theorick,²
 Wherein the toged consuls³ can propose
 As masterly as he: mere prattle, without practice,
 Is all his foldiership. But, he, fir, had the election:
 And I,—of whom his eyes had seen the proof,
 At Rhodes, at Cyprus: and on other grounds
 Christian and heathen,—must be be-lee'd and calm'd⁴

By

not yet been, and had therefore never seen her,) Iago cannot be supposed to allude to the report concerning his marriage with her, and consequently this part of my argument must fall to the ground.

Had Shakspeare, consistently with Iago's character, meant to make him say that Cassio was *actually damn'd in being married to a handsome woman*, he would have made him say it *outright*, and not to have interposed the palliative *almost*. Whereas what he says at present amounts to no more than that (however near his marriage) he is not yet *completely damn'd*, because he is not *absolutely married*. The succeeding parts of Iago's conversation sufficiently evince, that the poet thought no mode of conception or expression too brutal for the character. STEEVENS.

² *Theorick*, for *theory*. STEEVENS.

This was the common language of Shakspeare's time. MALONE.

³ *Consuls*, for *counsellors*. WARBURTON.

Sir T. Hanmer reads, *council*. Mr. Theobald would have us read *counsellors*. Venice was originally governed by *consuls*: and *consuls* seems to have been commonly used for *counsellors*, as afterwards in this play.—Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Matthew Paris after him, call both dukes and earls, *consuls*. STEEVENS.

The *rulers of the state*, or civil governours. MALONE.

By *tog'd* perhaps is meant *peaceable*, in opposition to the *warlike* qualifications of which he had been speaking. He might have formed the word in allusion to the Latin adage,—*Cedant arma togæ*. STEEVENS.

⁴ The old quarto—*led*. The first folio reads, *be-lee'd*: but that spoils the measure. I read, *let*, hindered. WARBURTON.

Be-lee'd suits to *calm'd*, and the measure is not less perfect than in many other places. JOHNSON.

Be-lee'd and *be-calm'd* are terms of navigation.

I have been informed that one vessel is said to be in the *lee* of another, when it is so placed that the wind is intercepted from it. Iago's meaning therefore is, that Cassio had got the wind of him, and *be-calm'd* him from going on.

To *be-calm* (as I learn from Falconer's *Marine Dictionary*) is likewise to obstruct the current of the wind in its passage to a ship, by any contiguous object. STEEVENS.

By debtor and creditor, this counter-caster;⁵
 He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
 And I, (God bless the mark!⁶) his Moor-ship's⁷ ancient.

Rod. By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

Iago. But there's no remedy, 'tis the curse of service;
 Preferment goes by letter,⁸ and affection,
 Not by the old gradation,⁹ where each second
 Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself,
 Whether I in any just term am affin'd²
 To love the Moor.

Rod. I would not follow him then.

Iago. O, sir, content you;
 I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
 We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
 Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
 Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
 'That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
 Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
 For nought but provender; and, when he's old, cashier'd;³
 Whip me such honest knaves:⁴ Others there are,

Who,

⁵ It was anciently the practice to reckon up sums with *counters*. To this Shakspeare alludes again in *Cymbeline*, Act V: "—— it sums up thousands in a trice: you have no true debtor and creditor, but it; of what's past, is, and to come, the discharge. Your neck, sir, is pen, book, and *counters*;" &c. STEEVENS.

⁶ Kelly, in his comments on Scots proverbs, observes, that the Scots, when they compare person to person, use this exclamation.

I find, however, this phrase in Churchyard's *Tragicall Discourse of a dolorous Gentlewoman*, &c. 1593. And it is singular that both Churchyard and Shakspeare should have used this form of words with reference to a black person. STEEVENS.

⁷ The first quarto reads—his *worship's*. STEEVENS.

⁸ By recommendation from powerful friends. JOHNSON.

⁹ Old gradation, is gradation established by ancient practice.

JOHNSON.

² *Affin'd* is the reading of the third quarto and the first folio. The second quarto and all the modern editions have *assign'd*. The meaning is,—Do I stand within any such terms of propinquity, or relation to the Moor, as that it is my duty to love him? JOHNSON.

³ Surely this line was originally shorter. We might safely read,

For nought but provender; when old, cashier'd. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Knave* is here for *servant*, but with a sly mixture of contempt.

JOHNSON.

Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
 Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves;
 And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
 Do well thrive by them, and, when they have lin'd their
 coats,

Do themselves homage: these fellows have some soul;
 And such a one do I profess myself.

For, fir,

It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
 Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:
 In following him, I follow but myself;
 Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
 But seeming so, for my peculiar end:
 For when my outward action doth demonstrate
 The native act and figure of my heart
 In compliment extern,⁵ 'tis not long after
 But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
 For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.

Rod. What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,⁶
 If he can carry't thus!

Iago. Call up her father,
 Rouse him: make after him, poison his delight,
 Proclaim him in the streets; incense her kinsmen,
 And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
 Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,
 Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,
 As it may lose some colour.

Rod. Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud.

Iago. Do; with like timorous accent, and dire yell,
 As when, by night and negligence, the fire
 Is spied in populous cities.⁷

Rod.

⁵ In that which I do only for an outward show of civility. JOHNSON.

⁶ *Full fortune* is, I believe, a complete piece of good fortune, as in another scene of this play a *full soldier* is put for a complete soldier.

To *owe* is an ancient language, to *own*,—or possess. STEEVENS.

⁷ The particle is used equivocally; the same liberty is taken by writers more correct:

“The wonderful creature! a woman of reason!”

“Never grave out of pride, never gay out of season.”

JOHNSON.

By

Rod. What ho! Brabantio! signior Brabantio, ho!

Iago. Awake! what, ho! Brabantio! thieves! thieves! thieves!

Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!
Thieves! thieves!

BRABANTIO, *above, at a window.*

Bra. What is the reason of this terrible summons?
What is the matter there?

Rod. Signior, is all your family within?

Iago. Are your doors lock'd?

Bra. Why? wherefore ask you this?

Iago. 'Zounds, sir, you are robb'd; for shame, put on
your gown;

Your heart is burst,⁸ you have lost half your soul;

Even now, very now, an old black ram

Is tugging your white ewe.⁹ Arise, arise;

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,

Or else the devil will make a grandfire of you:

Arise, I say.

Bra. What, have you lost your wits?

Rod. Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

Bra. Not I; What are you?

Rod. My name is—Roderigo.

Bra. The worse welcome:

I have charg'd thee, not to haunt about my doors:

In honest plainness thou hast heard me say,

My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,

Being

By night and negligence means, during the time of night and negligence. M. MASON.

The meaning, as Mr. Edwards has observed, is, "not that the fire was spied by negligence, but the fire, which came by night and negligence, was spied. MALONE.

⁸ i. e. is broken. *Burst* for *broke* is used in our author's *King Henry IV.* Part II: "—— and then he *burst* his head for crowding among the marshal's men." STEEVENS.

⁹ In the north of England a ram is called a *tup*. MALONE.

It appears from a passage in Decker's *O per se O*, 4to. 1612, that this was a term in the cant language used by vagabonds: "As the men haue dicke-names, so likewise haue the women: for some of them are called *the white ewe*, the lambe," &c. STEEVENS.

Being full of supper, and distempering draughts,²
Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come
To start my quiet.

Rod. Sir, fir, fir, fir,——

Bra. But thou must needs be sure,
My spirit, and my place, have in them power
To make this bitter to thee.

Rod. Patience, good fir.

Bra. What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice;
My house is not a grange.³

Rod. Most grave Brabantio,
In simple and pure soul I come to you.

Iago. 'Zounds, fir, you are one of those, that will not
serve God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do
you service, you think we are ruffians: You'll have your
daughter cover'd with a Barbary horse; you'll have your
nephews neigh to you:⁴ you'll have courfers for cousins, and
gennets⁵ for germans.

Bra. What profane wretch art thou?⁶

Iago. I am one, fir, that comes to tell you, your daughter
and

² To be distempered with liquor, was, in Shakspeare's age, the phrase for intoxication. In *Hamlet*, the King is said to be "marvellous distempered with wine." MALONE.

³ That is, "you are in a populous city, not in a lone house, where a robbery might easily be committed." *Grange* is strictly and properly the farm of a monastery, where the religious reposed their corn. *Grangia*, Lat. from *Granum*. But in Lincolnshire, and in other northern counties, they call every lone house, or farm which stands solitary, a *grange*.

T. WARTON.

⁴ *Nephew*, in this instance, has the power of the Latin word *nepos*, and signifies a grandson, or any lineal descendant, however remote.

Sir W. Dugdale very often employs the word in this sense; and without it, it would not be very easy to show how *Brabantio* could have *nephews* by the marriage of his daughter. Ben Jonson likewise uses it with the same meaning. The alliteration in this passage caused Shakspeare to have recourse to it. STEEVENS.

⁵ A *jennet* is a Spanish horse. STEEVENS.

⁶ That is, *what wretch of gross and licentious language?* In that sense Shakspeare often uses the word profane. JOHNSON.

It is so used by other writers of the same age:

"How far off dwells the house-surgeon?"

"—— You are a profane fellow, i'faith." STEEVENS.

and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.⁷

Bra. Thou art a villain.

Iago.

You are—a senator.

Bra. This thou shalt answer; I know thee, Roderigo.

Rod. Sir, I will answer any thing. But I beseech you,
If't be your pleasure, and most wise consent,
(As partly, I find, it is,) that your fair daughter,
At this odd-even and dull watch o'the night,⁸
Transported—with no worse nor better guard,
But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,—
To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor,—
If this be known to you, and your allowance,⁹
We then have done you bold and faucy wrongs;
But, if you know not this, my manners tell me,
We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe,
That, from the sense of all civility,²
I thus would play and trifle with your reverence:
Your daughter,—if you have not given her leave,—
I say again, hath made a gross revolt;
Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,
In an extravagant³ and wheeling stranger,

Of

⁷ This is an ancient proverbial expression in the French language, whence Shakspeare probably borrowed it; for in the *Dictionnaire des Proverbes Françoises*, par G. D. B. Brusselles, 1710, 12mo. I find the following article: “Faire la bête à deux dos,” pour dire, faire l’amour.

PERCY.

⁸ The *even* of *night* is *midnight*, the time when night is divided into *even* parts. JOHNSON.

Odd is here ambiguously used, as it signifies *strange*, *uncouth*, or *unwonted*; and as it is opposed to *even*.

But this expression, however explained, is very harsh. STEEVENS.

This ODD EVEN is simply the interval between twelve at night and one in the morning. HENLEY.

Shakspeare was probably thinking of his boyish school-play, *odd or even*. MALONE.

Surely, “almost at odds with morning” signifies, almost entering into conflict with it. STEEVENS.

⁹ i. e. done with your approbation. MALONE.

² That is, in opposition to, or departing from the sense of all civility.

MALONE.

³ *Extravagant* is here used in its Latin signification, for *wandering*. Thus, in *Hamlet*: “The extravagant, and erring spirit,—”

STEEVENS.

Of here and every where : Straight satisfy yourself :
 If she be in her chamber, or your house,
 Let loose on me the justice of the state
 For thus deluding you.

Bra. Strike on the tinder, ho !
 Give me a taper ;—call up all my people :—
 This accident is not unlike my dream,
 Belief of it oppresses me already :—
 Light, I say ! light ! [Exit, from above.]

Iago. Farewell ; for I must leave you :
 It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,
 To be produc'd (as, if I stay, I shall,)
 Against the Moor : For, I do know, the state,—
 However this may gall him with some check,⁴—
 Cannot with safety cast him ;⁵ for he's embark'd
 With such loud reason to the Cyprus' wars,
 (Which even now stand in act,) that, for their souls,
 Another of his fathom they have not,
 To lead their business : in which regard,
 Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,
 Yet, for necessity of present life,
 I must show out a flag and sign of love,
 Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find him,
 Lead to the Sagittary the rais'd search ;
 And there will I be with him. So, farewell. [Exit.]

Enter, below, BRABANTIO, and Servants with torches.

Bra. It is too true an evil : gone she is ;
 And what's to come of my despised time,⁶
 Is nought but bitterness.—Now, Roderigo,
 Where didst thou see her ?—O unhappy girl !—
 With the Moor, say'st thou ?—Who would be a father ?—
 How didst thou know 'twas she ?—O, thou deceiv'st me
 Past thought !—What said she to you ?—Get more tapers ;
 Raise all my kindred.—Are they married think you ?

Rod.

⁴ Some rebuke. JOHNSON.

⁵ That is, *dismiss* him ; *reject* him. We still say, a *cast* coat, and a *cast* serving-man. JOHNSON.

⁶ *Despised time*, is time of no value. JOHNSON.

Rod. Truly, I think, they are.

Bra. O heaven!—How got she out!—O treason of the blood!—

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds
By what you see them act.—Are there not charms,
By which the property of youth and maidhood
May be abus'd?⁷ Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?

Rod. Yes, sir; I have, indeed.

Bra. Call up my brother.—O, that you had had her!—
Some one way, some another.—Do you know
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

Rod. I think, I can discover him; if you please
To get good guard, and go along with me.

Bra. Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;
I may command at most:—Get weapons, ho!
And raise some special officers of night.⁸—
On, good Roderigo;—I'll deserve your pains. [Exeunt,

S C E N E II.

The same. Another Street.

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Attendants.

Iago. Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff o'the conscience,⁹
To do no contriv'd murder; I lack iniquity
Sometimes, to do me service: Nine or ten times
I had thought to have yerk'd him here under the ribs.

Oth.

⁷ By which the faculties of a young virgin may be infatuated, and made subject to illusions and false imagination:

“——wicked dreams abuse

“The curtain'd sleep.” *Macbeth.* JOHNSON.

⁸ Thus the original quarto, 1622; for which the editor of the folio substituted—officers of *might*; a reading which all the modern editors have adopted. MALONE.

⁹ This expression to common readers appears harsh. *Stuff* of the conscience is, *substance* or *essence* of the conscience. *Stuff* is a word of great force in the Teutonic languages. The elements are called in Dutch, *Hoofd stoffen*, or *bead stuffs*. JOHNSON.

Oth. 'Tis better as it is.

Iago. Nay, but he prated,²
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
Against your honour,
That, with the little godliness I have,
I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray, fir,
Are you fast married? for, be sure of this,—
That the magnifico³ is much belov'd;
And hath, in his effect, a voice potential
As double as the duke's:⁴ he will divorce you;
Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
The law (with all his might, to enforce it on,)
Will give him cable.

Oth. Let him do his spite:
My services, which I have done the signiory,
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,
(Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
I shall promulgate,) I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege;⁵ and my demerits⁶
May speak, unbonneted,⁷ to as proud a fortune

As

² Of whom is this said? Of Roderigo? STEEVENS.

³ "The chief men of Venice are by a peculiar name called *Magnifici*, i. e. *magnificoes*." Minshieu's *Dictionary*. TOLLET.

⁴ The DOUBLE voice of Brabantio refers to the option, which (as being a *magnifico*, he was no less entitled to, than the duke himself,) EITHER, of nullifying the marriage of his daughter, contracted without his consent; or, of subjecting Othello to fine and imprisonment, for having seduced an heiress. HENLEY.

⁵ Men who have sat upon royal thrones.

The quarto has—*men of royal height*. *Siege* is used for *seat* by other authors. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Demerits* has the same meaning in our author, and many others of that age, as *merits*. Thus, in Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, p. 850. edit. 1730: "Henry Conway, esq. for his singular *demerits* received the dignity of knighthood."

Mere and *demerco* had the same meaning in the Roman language.

STEEVENS.

⁷ Thus all the copies read. It should be—*unbonneting*, i. e. without putting off the bonnet. POPE.

I do not see the propriety of Mr. Pope's emendation, though adopted by Dr. Warburton. *Unbonneting* may as well be, *not putting on*, as *not putting off*, the bonnet. *Hann* reads *e'en bonneted*. JOHNSON.

As this that I have reach'd : For know, Iago,
 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
 I would not my unhoused⁸ free condition
 Put into circumscription and confine
 For the sea's worth.⁹ But, look! what lights come yonder?

Enter CASSIO, at a distance, and certain Officers with torches.

Iago. These are the raised father, and his friends :
 You were best go in.

Oth. Not I : I must be found ;
 My parts, my title, and my perfect soul,
 Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they ?

Iago. By Janus, I think no.

Oth. The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant.
 The goodness of the night upon you, friends!

What

To speak *unbonnetted*, is to speak *with the cap off*, which is directly opposite to the poet's meaning. Othello means to say, that his birth and services set him upon such a rank, that he may speak to a senator of Venice with his hat *on* ; i. e. without showing any marks of deference or inequality. I there am inclined to think Shakspeare wrote :

May speak, and, bonnetted, &c. THEOBALD.

Unbonnetted, is uncovered, revealed, made known. In the second act and third scene of this play we meet with an expression similar to this :
 “ — you *unlace* your reputation ;” and another in *As you like it*, Act IV. sc. i : “ Now *unmuzzle* your wisdom.” A. C.

Mr. Fufeli (and who is better acquainted with the sense and spirit of our author?) explains this contested passage as follows : “ *I am his equal or superior in rank ; and were it not so, such are my demerits, that, unbonnetted, without the addition of patrician or senatorial dignity, they may speak to as proud a fortune, &c.*”

“ At Venice, the *bonnet*, as well as the *toge*, is a badge of aristocratic honours to this day.” STEEVENS.

⁸ Free from domestick cares. A thought natural to an adventurer.

JOHNSON.

Othello talking as a soldier, *unkoused* may signify the having no settled house or habitation. WHALLEY.

⁹ I would not marry her, though she were as rich as the Adriatick, which the Doge annually marries. JOHNSON.

As the gold ring, annually thrown by the Doge into the Adriatick, cannot be said to have much enriched it, I believe the common and obvious meaning of this passage is the true one. STEEVENS.

What is the news?

Caf. The duke does greet you, general;
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,²
Even on the instant.

Oth. What is the matter, think you?

Caf. Something from Cyprus, as I may divine;
It is a business of some heat: the gallies
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers
This very night, at one another's heels;
And many of the consuls, rais'd, and met,
Are at the duke's already: You have been hotly call'd for;
When, being not at your lodging to be found,
The senate hath sent about three several quests,³
To search you out.

Oth. 'Tis well I am found by you.
I will but spend a word here in the house,
And go with you.

[Exit.

Caf. Ancient, what makes he here?

Iago. 'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack;⁴
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

Caf. I do not understand.

Iago. He's married.

Caf. To who?⁵

Re-enter

² The comma, hitherto placed after *haste*, should be a hyphen. *Your haste-post-haste appearance* is your immediate appearance. The words "*Haste, post, haste*," were in our author's time usually written on the cover of packets, or letters, sent express. RITSON.

³ *Quests* are, on this occasion, searches. STEEVENS.

⁴ A *carack* is a ship of great bulk, and commonly of great value; perhaps what we now call a *galley*. JOHNSON.

The first ships that came richly laden from the West Indies to Europe were those from the Caraccas, part of the Spanish settlements: and some years ago a Caracca ship generally proved a very rich prize.

M. MASON.

A *carack*, or *carick*, (for so it was more frequently written in Shakespeare's time,) is of higher origin, and was denominated from the Spanish word, *caraca*, which signifies a vessel of great bulk, constructed to carry a heavy burthen. The Spanish *caraca*, Minsheu thinks, may have been formed from the Italian *carico*, a lading, or freight. MALONE.

⁵ It is somewhat singular that Cassio should ask this question. He who was acquainted with the object courted by his friend, could have little reason for doubting to whom he would be married. STEEVENS.

Re-enter OTHELLO.

Iago. Marry, to — Come, captain, will you go?

Oth. Have with you.⁶

Cas. Here comes another troop to seek for you.

Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers of night, with torches and weapons.

Iago. It is Brabantio :—general, be advis'd ;⁷
He comes to bad intent.

Oth. Hola ! stand there !

Rod. Signior, it is the Moor.

Bra. Down with him, thief !

[They draw on both sides.]

Iago. You, Roderigo ! come, sir, I am for you.

Oth. Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.—

Good signior, you shall more command with years,
Than with your weapons.

Bra. O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my
daughter ?

Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her ;

For I'll refer me to all things of sense,

If she in chains of magick were not bound,

Whether a maid—so tender, fair, and happy ;

So opposite to marriage, that she shunn'd

The wealthy curled⁸ darlings of our nation,—

Would

Cassio's seeming ignorance of Othello's courtship or marriage might only be affected ; in order to keep his friend's secret, till it became publickly known. BLACKSTONE.

Or he might fear that Othello had proved false to the gentle Desdemona, and married another. MALONE.

How far this suspicious apprehension would have become the benevolent Cassio, the intimate friend of Othello, let the reader judge. STEEVENS.

⁶ This expression denotes readiness. STEEVENS.

⁷ That is, be cool ; be cautious ; be discreet. JOHNSON.

⁸ Curled is elegantly and ostentatiously dressed. He had not the hair particularly in his thoughts. JOHNSON.

On

Would ever have, to incur a general mock,
 Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
 Of such a thing as thou; to fear,⁹ not to delight.
 [Judge me the world,² if 'tis not gross in sense,
 That thou hast practis'd on her with foul charms;
 Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals,
 That waken motion:³—I'll have it disputed on:

'Tis

On another occasion Shakspeare employs the same expression, and evidently alludes to *the hair*:

“If she first meet the *curled* Antony,” &c. STEEVENS.

That Dr. Johnson was mistaken in his interpretation of this line, is ascertained by our poet's *Rape of Lucrece*, where the hair is not merely alluded to, but expressly mentioned, and the epithet *curled* is added as characteristick of a person of the highest rank:

“Let him have time to tear his *curled hair*.”

Tarquin, a king's son, is the person spoken of. Edgar, when he was “proud in heart and mind,” *curl'd his hair*. MALONE.

⁹ To *fear*, in the present instance, may mean—to terrify.

STEEVENS.

To one more likely to terrify than delight her. So, in the next scene (Brabantio is again the speaker):

“To fall in love with what *she fear'd* to look on.”

Mr. Steevens supposes *fear* to be a verb here, used in the sense of to terrify; a signification which it formerly had. But *fear*, I apprehend, is a substantive, and poetically used for the *object* of fear. MALONE.

² The lines following in crotchets are not in the first edition. [1612.]

POPE.

³ [Old copy—*weaken*.] Hanmer reads with probability:

That waken motion:—— JOHNSON.

Motion, in a subsequent scene of this play, is used in the very sense in which Sir T. Hanmer would employ it:—“But we have reason to cool our raging *motions*, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts.” STEEVENS.

To *weaken motion* is, to *impair the faculties*. It was till very lately, and may with some be still an opinion, that philtres or love potions have the power of perverting, and of course weakening or impairing both the sight and judgement, and of procuring fondness or dotage toward any unworthy object who administers them. And by *motion*, Shakspeare means the senses which are depraved and weakened by these fascinating mixtures.

RITSON.

I have adopted Sir Thomas Hanmer's emendation, because I have a good reason to believe that the words *weaken* and *waken* were in Shakspeare's

'Tis probable, and palpable to thinking.
 I therefore apprehend and do attach thee,]
 For an abuser of the world, a practiser
 Of arts inhibited and out of warrant :—
 Lay hold upon him ; if he do resist,
 Subdue him at his peril.

Oth. Hold your hands,
 Both you of my inclining, and the rest :
 Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
 Without a prompter.—Where will you that I go
 To answer this your charge ?

Bra. To prison ; till fit time
 Of law, and course of direct session,
 Call thee to answer.

Oth. What if I do obey ?
 How may the duke be therewith satisfied ;
 Whose messengers are here about my side,
 Upon some present business of the state,
 To bring me to him ?

Off.

speare's time pronounced alike, and hence the mistake might easily have happened.

We have in the play before us—*waken'd wrath*, and I think in some other play of Shakspeare—*waken'd love*.

The notion of the efficacy of love-powders was formerly so prevalent, that in the parliament summoned by King Richard the Third, on his usurping the throne, it was publickly urged as a charge against lady Grey, that she had bewitched King Edward the Fourth, “ by strange potions and amorous charms.” MALONE.

In the passages adduced by Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone, to prove that *motion* signifies *lustful desires*, it may be remarked that the word derives this *peculiar meaning*, either from some epithet, or restrictive mode of expression, with which it stands connected. But, had it been used *absolutely*, in *that sense*, with what consistency could Brabantio attribute the emotions of lust in his daughter, to the irritation of those very philtres, which he, in the self-same breath, represents as abating it ?

The *drugs or minerals*, with which Othello is charged as having *abused the delicate youth* of Desdemona, were supposed to have accomplished his purpose, by

“ Charming her blood with pleasing heaviness,”
 thereby *weakening* MOTION, that is, *subduing* her MAIDEN PUDENCY,
 and *lulling* her WONTED COYNESS into a state of acquiescence. HENLEY.

Off. 'Tis true, most worthy signior,
The duke's in council; and your noble self,
I am sure, is sent for.

Bra. How! the duke in council!
In this time of the night!—Bring him away:
Mine's not an idle cause: the duke himself,
Or any of my brothers of the state,
Cannot but feel this wrong, as 'twere their own:
For if such actions may have passage free,
Bond-slaves, and pagans,⁴ shall our statesmen be. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The same. A Council-Chamber.

The Duke, and Senators, sitting at a table; Officers attending.

Duke. There is no composition⁵ in these news,
That gives them credit.

1. Sen. Indeed, they are disproportion'd;
My letters say, a hundred and seven gallies.

Duke. And mine, a hundred and forty.

2. Sen. And mine, two hundred:
But though they jump not on a just account,

(As

⁴ Mr. Theobald alters *pagans* to *pageants*, for this reason, "That pagans are as strict and moral all the world over, as the most regular Christians, in the preservation of private property." But what then? The speaker had not this high opinion of pagan morality, as is plain from hence, that this important discovery, so much to the honour of paganism, was first made by our editor. *WARBURTON.*

The meaning of these expressions of Brabantio seem to have been mistaken. I believe the morality of either christians or pagans was not in our author's thoughts. He alludes to the common condition of all blacks, who come from their own country, both *slaves* and *pagans*; and uses the word in contempt of Othello and his complexion.—If this Moor is now suffered to escape with impunity, it will be such an encouragement to his black countrymen, that we may expect to see all the first offices of our state filled up by the *pagans* and *bond-slaves* of Africa.

STEEVENS.

In our author's time *pagan* was a very common expression of contempt.

MALONE.

⁵ *Composition*, for *consistency*, *concordancy*. *WARBURTON.*

(As in these cases, where the aim reports,⁶
'Tis oft with difference,) yet do they all confirm
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

Duke. Nay, it is possible enough to judgement ;
I do not so secure me in the error,
But the main article I do approve
In fearful sense.

Sailor. [*Within.*] What ho ! what ho ! what ho !

Enter an Officer with a Sailor.

Off. A messenger from the gallies.

Duke.

Now ? the business ?

Sail. The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes ;
So was I bid report here to the state,
By signior Angelo.

Duke. How say you by this change ?

1. *Sen.*

This cannot be,

By no assay⁷ of reason ; 'tis a pageant,
To keep us in false gaze : When we consider
The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk ;
And let ourselves again but understand,
That, as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
So may he with more facile question⁸ bear it,
For that it stands not in such warlike brace,⁹
But altogether lacks the abilities

That

⁶ The folio has—*the* aim reports. But, *they* aim reports, [the reading of the quarto] has a sense sufficiently easy and commodious. Where men report not by certain knowledge, but by aim and conjecture.

JOHNSON.

To aim is to conjecture. So, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* :

“ But fearing lest my jealous aim might err.” STEEVENS.

In these cases where conjecture or suspicion tells the tale. MALONE.

⁷ Bring it to the test, examine it by reason as we examine metals by the assay, it will be found counterfeit by all trials. JOHNSON.

⁸ Question is for the act of seeking. With more easy endeavour.

JOHNSON.

That is, he may carry it with less dispute, with less opposition. I don't see how the word *question* can signify the act of seeking, though the word *quest* may. M. MASON.

⁹ State of defence. To aim was called to brace on the armour.

JOHNSON.

That Rhodes is dress'd in :—if we make thought of this,
We must not think, the Turk is so unskilful,
To leave that latest, which concerns him first ;
Neglecting an attempt of ease, and gain,
To wake, and wage,² a danger profitless.

Duke. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

Off. Here is more news.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,
Have there injointed them with an after fleet.

1. Sen. Ay, so I thought :—How many, as you guess ?

Mess. Of thirty sail : and now do they re-stem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus.—Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty, recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.³

Duke. 'Tis certain then for Cyprus.—
Marcus Lucchese, is he not in town ?

1. Sen. He's now in Florence.

Duke. Write from us ; wish him ⁴ post-post-haste : ⁵ de-
spatch.

1. Sen. Here comes Brabantio, and the valiant Moor.

² To *wage* here, as in many other places in Shakspeare, signifies to fight, to combat. It took its rise from the common expression, to *wage war*. STEEVENS.

³ He entreats you not to doubt the truth of this intelligence.

JOHNSON.

⁴ i. e. recommend, desire him. REED.

⁵ i. e. tell him we wish him to make all possible haste. *Post-haste* is before in this play used adjectively :

“ And he requires your *haste-post-haste* appearance.”

All messengers in the time of Shakspeare were enjoined, “ *Haste haste ; for thy life, post haste.*” MALONE.

Enter

Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, IAGO, RODERIGO, *and*
Officers.

Duke. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.⁶
I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;

[*To* BRABANTIO.

We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

Bra. So did I yours: Good your grace, pardon me;
Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business,
Hath rais'd me from my bed; nor doth the general care⁷
Take hold on me; for my particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'er-bearing nature,
That it engulfs and swallows other sorrows,
And it is still itself.

Duke. Why, what's the matter?

Bra. My daughter! O, my daughter!

Sen. Dead?

Bra. Ay, to me;

She is abus'd, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks:⁸

For

⁶ It is part of the policy of the Venetian state never to entrust the command of an army to a native. MALONE.

It was usual for the Venetians to employ strangers and even Moors in their wars. REED.

⁷ The word *care*, which encumbers the verse, was probably added by the players. Shakspeare uses *the general* as a substantive, though, I think, not in this sense. JOHNSON.

The word *general*, when used by Shakspeare as a substantive, always implies the populace, not the publick: and if it were used here as an adjective, without the word *care*, it must refer to *grief* in the following line, a word which may properly denote a private sorrow, but not the alarm which a nation is supposed to feel on the approach of a formidable enemy. M. MASON.

⁸ Rymer has ridiculed this circumstance as unbecoming (both for its weakness and superstition,) the gravity of the accuser, and the dignity of the tribunal: but his criticism only exposes his own ignorance. The circumstance was not only exactly in character, but urged with the greatest address, as the thing chiefly to be insisted on. For, by the Venetian law, the giving love potions was very criminal, as Shakspeare, without

For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not⁹——

Duke. Whoe'er he be, that in this foul proceeding,
Hath thus beguil'd your daughter of herself,
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter,
After your own sense; yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.²

Bra. Humbly I thank your grace.
Here is the man, this Moor; whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate, for the state affairs,
Hath hither brought.

Duke and Sen. We are very sorry for it.

Duke. What, in your own part, can you say to this?

[To OTHELLO.

Bra.

without question well understood; and therefore, in the preceding scene,
Brabantio calls them,

“——arts inhibited, and out of warrant.”

WARBURTON.

Though I believe Shakspeare knew no more of this Venetian law
than I do, yet he was well acquainted with the edicts of that sapient
prince, King James the First, against

“——practisers

“Of arts inhibited, and out of warrant.” STEEVENS.

⁹ The grammar requires that we should read:

For nature so preposterously err, &c.

without the article *to*; and then the sentence will be complete.

M. MASON.

Were I certain that our author designed the sentence to be complete,
and not to be cut short by the Duke's interruption, I should readily
adopt the amendment proposed by Mr. M. Mason. STEEVENS.

Omission is at all times the most dangerous mode of emendation, and
here assuredly is unnecessary. We have again and again had occasion to
observe, that Shakspeare frequently begins to construct a sentence in one
mode, and ends it in another. Here he uses *could not*, as if he had writ-
ten, *has not the power or capacity to, &c.* It is not in nature *so to err*;
she knows not how to do it. MALONE.

Mr. Malone's opinion relative to omissions, is contradicted by an an-
cient canon of criticism,—*Præferatur lectio brevior*. I think it, in re-
spect to Shakspeare, of all other modes of emendation the least repre-
hensible. STEEVENS.

² Were the man exposed to your charge or accusation. JOHNSON.

Bra. Nothing, but this is so.

Oth. Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approv'd good masters,—
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true; true, I have married her;
The very head and front of my offending³
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
And little blest'd with the set⁴ phrase of peace;
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have us'd
Their dearest action⁵ in the tented field;
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
And therefore little shall I grace my cause,
In speaking for myself: Yet, by your gracious patience,
I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,
What conjuration, and what mighty magick,
(For such proceeding I am charg'd withal,)
I won his daughter with.⁶

Bra.

³ The *main*, the *whole*, unextenuated. JOHNSON.

⁴ "*Frons causæ non satis honesta est*," is a phrase used by Quintilian.
STEEVENS.

⁴ *Soft* is the reading of the folio. JOHNSON.

This apology, if address'd to his mistress, had been well expressed. But what he wanted, in speaking before a Venetian senate, was not the *soft* blandishments of speech, but the art and method of masculine eloquence. The old quarto reads it, therefore, as I am persuaded Shakespeare wrote:

————— *the set phrase of peace.* WARBURTON.

Soft may have been used for *still* and *calm*, as opposed to the clamours of war.

⁵ That is, *dear*, for which much is paid, whether money or labour; *dear action*, is action performed at great expence, either of ease or safety.
JOHNSON.

Their dearest action, is their most important action. MALONE.

Instead of their *dearest action*, we should say in modern language, their *best exertion*. STEEVENS.

I should give these words a more natural signification, and suppose that they mean—their *favourite action*, the action most dear to them.

M. MASON.

⁶ [The first quarto and folio—I won his daughter.] i. e. I won his daughter

Bra. A maiden never bold;
 Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
 Blush'd at herself;⁶ And she,—in spite of nature,
 Of years, of country, credit, every thing,—
 'To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on?
 It is a judgement maim'd, and most imperfect,
 That will confess—perfection so could err
 Against all rules of nature; and must be driven
 To find out practices of cunning hell,
 Why this should be. I therefore vouch again,
 That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
 Or with some dram conjur'd to this effect,
 He wrought upon her.

Duke. To vouch this, is no proof;⁷
 Without more certain and more overt test,⁸
 Than these thin habits, and poor likelihoods
 Of modern seeming,⁹ do prefer against him.

1. Sen. But, Othello, speak:—
 Did you by indirect and forced courses
 Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
 Or came it by request, and such fair question
 As soul to soul affordeth?

Oth. I do beseech you,
 Send for the lady to the Sagittary,²

And

daughter *with* : and so all the modern editors read, adopting an interpolation made by the editor of the second folio, who was wholly unacquainted with our poet's metre and phraseology. MALONE.

As my sentiments concerning the merits of the second folio are diametrically opposite to Mr. Malone's opinion of it, I have not displaced a grammatical to make room for an ungrammatical expression.

The more I am become acquainted with the ancient copies, the less confidence I am disposed to place in their authority, as often as they exhibit anomalous language, and defective metre. STEEVENS.

⁶ Mr. Pope reads—at *itself*, but without necessity. Shakspeare, like other writers of his age, frequently uses the *personal*, instead of the *neutral* pronoun. STEEVENS.

⁷ The first folio unites this speech with the preceding one of *Brabantio*; and instead of *certain* reads *wider*. STEEVENS.

⁸ Open proofs, external evidence. JOHNSON.

⁹ Weak show of slight appearance. JOHNSON.

So modern is generally used by Shakspeare. MALONE.

² The *Sagittary* means the sign of the fictitious creature so called.

A. C.

And let her speak of me before her father :
 If you do find me foul in her report,
 The trust, the office, I do hold of you,
 Not only take away, but let your sentence
 Even fall upon my life.

Duke.

Fetch Desdemona hither.

Oth. Ancient, conduct them ; you best know the place.—

[*Exeunt IAGO and Attendants.*]

And, till she come, as truly as to heaven
 I do confess the vices of my blood,
 So justly to your grave ears I'll present,
 How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
 And she in mine.

Duke. Say it, Othello.

Oth. Her father lov'd me ; oft invited me ;
 Still question'd me the story of my life,
 From year to year ; the battles, sieges, fortunes,
 That I have pass'd.
 I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
 To the very moment that he bade me tell it.
 Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
 Of moving accidents, by flood, and field ;
 Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach ;
 Of being taken by the insolent foe,
 And sold to slavery ; of my redemption thence,
 And portance in my travel's history : ³

Wherein

i. e. an animal compounded of man and horse, and armed with a bow and quiver. STEEVENS.

³ I have restored—

And with it all my travel's history,
 from the old edition. It is in the rest,

And portance in my travel's history.

Rymer, in his criticism, on this play, has changed it to *portents*, instead of *portance*. POPE.

Mr. Pope has restored a line to which there is a little objection, but which has no force. I believe *portance* was the author's word in some revised copy. I read thus :

Of being——sold

To slavery, of my redemption thence,

And portance in't ; my travel's history.

My redemption from slavery, and behaviour in it. JOHNSON.

Wherein of antres vast,⁴ and desarts idle,⁵
 Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,
 It was my hint to speak,⁶ such was the process;
 And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads

Do

⁴ Discourses of this nature made the subject of the politest conversations, when voyages into, and discoveries of, the new world were all in vogue. So, when the Bastard Faulconbridge in *King John*, describes the behaviour of upstart greatness, he makes one of the essential circumstances of it to be this kind of table-talk. The fashion then running altogether in this way, it is no wonder a young lady of quality should be struck with the history of an adventurer. So that Rymer, who professedly ridicules this whole circumstance, and the noble author of the *Characteristicks*, who more obliquely sneers at it, only expose their own ignorance. **WARBURTON.**

Whoever ridicules this account of the progress of love, shows his ignorance, not only of history, but of nature and manners. It is no wonder that, in any age, or in any nation, a lady, recluse, timorous, and delicate, should desire to hear of events and scenes which she could never see, and should admire the man who had endured dangers, and performed actions, which, however great, were yet magnified by her timidity.

JOHNSON.

— antres—] French, grottos. **POPE.**

Caves and dens. **JOHNSON.**

⁵ Every mind is liable to absence and inadvertency, else Pope [who reads—desarts *wild*,] could never have rejected a word so poetically beautiful. *Idle* is an epithet used to express the infertility of the chaotic state, in the Saxon translation of the Pentateuch. **JOHNSON.**

⁶ This implies it as done by a trap laid for her: but the old quarto reads *bent*, i. e. use, custom. [*Hint* is the reading of the folio.]

WARBURTON.

Hent is not *use* in Shakspeare, nor, I believe, in any other author. *Hint*, or *cue*, is commonly used for occasion of speech, which is explained by, *such is the process*, that is, the cause of the tale required it. If *bent* be restored, it may be explained by *bundle*. I had a *bundle*, or opportunity, to speak of cannibals. **JOHNSON.**

Hent occurs at the conclusion of the 4th act of *Measure for Measure*. It is derived from the Saxon *Hentan*, and means, to take hold of, to seize;

“ ——— the gravest citizens

“ Have *bent* the gates.”

But in the very next page Othello says:

“ ——— Upon this *bint* I spake.”

It is certain therefore that change is unnecessary. **STEEVENS.**

Do grow beneath their shoulders.⁷ These things to hear,
 Would Desdemona seriously incline:
 But still the house affairs would draw her thence;
 Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
 She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
 Devour up my discourse:⁸ Which I observing,
 Took once a pliant hour; and found good means
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
 But not intentively:⁹ I did consent;
 And often did beguile her of her tears,
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke,
 That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:²
 She swore,—In faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
 She wish'd she had not heard it; yet she wish'd
 That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me;
 And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,
 I should but teach him how to tell my story,

And

⁷ Of these men there is an account in the interpolated travels of Mandeville, a book of that time. JOHNSON.

The *Cannibals* and *Anthropophagi* were known to an English audience before Shakspeare introduced them. In *The History of Orlando Furioso*, played for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth, they are mentioned in the very first scene; and Raleigh speaks of people whose heads appear *not above* their shoulders. STEEVENS.

Histories (says Bernard Gilpin, in a sermon before Edward VI.) make mention of a “people called *Anthropophagi*, eaters of men.” REED.

⁸ Both these phrases occur in Tully. “Non semper implet aures meas, ita sunt avidæ & capaces.” *Orat.* 104. “Nos Hinc voramus literas—.” *Ad Attic.* iv. 14. STEEVENS.

⁹ Thus the eldest quarto. The first folio reads—*instinctively*: the second,—*distinctively*. The old word, however, may stand. *Intention* and *attention* were once synonymous. STEEVENS.

Distinctively was the conjectural emendation of the editor of the second folio, who never examined a single quarto copy. MALONE.

² It was *kisses* in the later editions: but this is evidently the true reading. The lady had been forward indeed to give him a *world of kisses* upon a bare recital of his story; nor does it agree with the following lines. POPE.

And that would woo her. Upon this hint, I spake :
 She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd ;
 And I lov'd her, that she did pity them.
 This only is the witchcraft I have us'd ;
 Here comes the lady, let her witness it.

Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and Attendants.

Duke. I think, this tale would win my daughter too.—
 Good Brabantio,
 Take up this mingled matter at the best :
 Men do their broken weapons rather use,
 Than their bare hands.

Bra. I pray you, hear her speak ;
 If she confess, that she was half the wooer,
 Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
 Light on the man !—Come hither, gentle mistress ;
 Do you perceive in all this noble company,
 Where most you owe obedience ?

Des. My noble father,
 I do perceive here a divided duty :
 To you I am bound for life, and education ;
 My life, and education, both do learn me
 How to respect you ; you are the lord of duty,
 I am hitherto your daughter : But here's my husband ;
 And so much duty as my mother show'd
 To you, preferring you before her father,³
 So much I challenge that I may profess
 Due to the Moor, my lord.

Bra. God be with you !—I have done :—
 Please it your grace, on to the state affairs ;
 I had rather to adopt a child, than get it.—
 Come hither, Moor :
 I here do give thee that with all my heart,
 Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
 I would keep from thee.—For your sake, jewel,

I am

³ Perhaps Shakspeare had here in his thoughts the answer of the youngest daughter of *Ina*, king of the West Saxons, to her father, which he seems to have copied in *King Lear*. MALONE.

I am glad at foul I have no other child ;
 For thy escape would teach me tyranny,
 To hang clogs on them.—I have done, my lord.

Duke. Let me speak like yourself;⁴ and lay a sentence,
 Which, as a grise,⁵ or step, may help these lovers
 Into your favour.

When remedies are past, the griefs are ended,⁶
 By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
 To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,
 Is the next way to draw new mischief on.

What cannot be preserv'd when fortune takes,
 Patience her injury a mockery makes.

The robb'd, that smiles, steals something from the thief;
 He robs himself, that spends a bootless grief.

Bra. So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
 We lose it not, so long as we can smile.
 He bears the sentence well, that nothing bears
 But the free comfort which from thence he hears :⁷
 But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow,
 That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.
 These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,
 Being strong on both sides, are equivocal :
 But words are words ; I never yet did hear,
 That the bruis'd heart was pierced through the ear.⁸

I humbly

⁴ The duke seems to mean, when he says he will speak like Brabantio, that he will speak sententiously. JOHNSON.

Let me speak as yourself would speak, were you not too much heated with passion. SIR J. REYNOLDS.

⁵ *Grizer* from *degrees*. A *grize* is a step.

In the will of K. Henry VI. where the dimensions of King's College chapel at Cambridge are set down, the word occurs, as spelt in some of the old editions of Shakspeare: " — from the provost's stall, unto the *greece* called *Gradus Chori*, 90 feet." STEEVENS.

⁶ This our poet has elsewhere expressed [In *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act V. sc. ii.] by a common proverbial sentence, *Past cure is still past care*.

MALONE.

⁷ But the moral precepts of consolation, which are liberally bestowed on occasion of the sentence. JOHNSON.

⁸ The duke had by sage sentences been exhorting Brabantio to patience, and to forget the grief of his daughter's stolen marriage, to which Brabantio is made very pertinently to reply to this effect: " My lord,
 I ap-

I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.

Duke. The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus:—O:hello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you: And though we have there a substitute of most allow'd sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you: you must therefore be content to slubber⁹ the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

Oth. The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war

My

I apprehend very well the wisdom of your advice; but though you would comfort me, words are but words; and the heart, already *bruise'd*, was never *pierc'd*, or *wounded*, through the ear." It is obvious that the text must be restored thus:

That the bruise'd heart was pieced through the ear.

i. e. that the wounds of sorrow were ever cured, or a man made *heart-whole* merely by the words of consolation. WARBURTON.

Shakspeare was continually changing his first expression for another, either stronger or more uncommon; so that very often the reader, who has not the same continuity or succession of ideas, is at a loss for its meaning. Many of Shakspeare's uncouth strained epithets may be explained by going back to the obvious and simple expression, which is most likely to occur to the mind in that state. I can imagine the first mode of expression that occurred to the poet was this:

The *troubled* heart was never cured by words.

To give it poetical force, he altered the phrase:

The *wounded* heart was never reached through the ear.

Wounded heart he changed to *broken*, and that to *bruised*, as a more common expression. *Reached* he altered to *touched*, and the transition is then easy to *pierced*, i. e. thoroughly *touched*. When the sentiment is brought to this state, the commentator, without this unravelling clue, expounds *piercing the heart* in its common acceptation *wounding the heart*, which making in this place nonsense, is corrected to *pieced the heart*, which is very stiff, and, as Polonius says, is a *vile phrase*.

SIR J. REYNOLDS.

Pierced may be right. The consequence of a *bruise* is sometimes matter collected, and this can no way be cured without *piercing* or letting it out.

STEEVENS.

A doubt has been entertained concerning the word *pierced*, which Dr. Warburton supposed to mean *wounded*, and therefore substituted *pieced* in its room. But *pierced* is merely a figurative expression, and means not *wounded*, but penetrated, in a metaphorical sense; thoroughly affected.

MALONE.

⁹ To *slubber*, on this occasion, is to *obscure*. STEEVENS.

My thrice-driven bed of down :² I do agnize³
 A natural and prompt alacrity,
 I find in hardness : and to undertake
 These present wars against the Ottomites.
 Most humbly therefore bending to your state,
 I crave fit disposition for my wife ;
 Due reference of place, and exhibition ;⁴
 With such accommodation, and besort,
 As levels with her breeding.

Duke. If you please,
 Be't at her father's.

Bra. I'll not have it so.

Oth. Nor I.

Des. Nor I ; I would not there reside,
 To put my father in impatient thoughts,
 By being in his eye. Most gracious duke,
 To my unfolding lend a gracious ear ;
 And let me find a charter in your voice,⁵
 To assist my simpleness.

Duke. What would you, Desdemona ?

Des. That I did love the Moor to live with him,
 My downright violence and storm of fortunes⁶

May

² A *driven* bed, is a bed for which the feathers are selected, by *driving* with a fan, which separates the light from the heavy. JOHNSON.

³ i. e. acknowledge, confess, avow. STEEVENS.

⁴ I desire, that proper *disposition* be made for my wife, that she may have *precedency* and *revenue*, accommodation and *company* suitable to her rank.

For *reference* of place, the old quartos have *reverence*, which Sir T. Hanmer has received. I should read,

Due preference of place,—JOHNSON.

Exhibition is allowance. The word is at present used only at the universities. STEEVENS.

⁵ Let your favour *privilege* me. JOHNSON.

⁶ *Violence* is not *violence suffered*, but *violence acted*. Breach of common rules and obligations. The old quarto has *scorn* of fortune, which is perhaps the true reading. JOHNSON.

I would rather continue to read—*storm of fortunes*, on account of the words that follow, viz. “ May trumpet to the world.” STEEVENS.

Mr. M. Mason objects, that Mr. Steevens has not explained these words. Is any explanation wanting ? or can he, who has read in *Hamlet*,
 that

May trumpet to the world ; my heart's subdu'd
 Even to the very quality of my lord :⁷
 I saw Othello's visage in his mind ;⁸
 And to his honours, and his valiant parts,
 Did I my soul and fortune consecrate.
 So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
 A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
 The rites, for which I love him, are bereft me,
 And I a heavy interim shall support
 By his dear absence : Let me go with him.

Oth. Your voices, lords :—'beseech you, let her will
 Have a free way.

Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not,
 To please the palate of my appetite ;
 Nor to comply with heat, the young affects,
 In my distinct⁹ and proper satisfaction ;

But

that a judicious player " in the *tempest* and *whirlwind* of his *passion* should acquire and beget a temperance ;" who has heard Falstaff wish for a *tempest* of provocation ; and finds in *Troilus and Cressida*—" in the wind and *tempest* of her frown," be at a loss to understand the meaning of a *storm of fortunes* ? By her *downright violence* and *storm of fortunes*, Desdemona without doubt means, the bold and decisive measure she had taken, of following the dictates of passion and giving herself to the Moor ; regardless of her parent's displeasure, the forms of her country, and the future inconvenience she might be subject to, by " tying her duty, beauty, wit, and *fortunes*, in an extravagant and wheeling stranger, of here and every where."

On looking into Mr. Edwards's remarks, I find he explains these words nearly in the same manner. MALONE.

⁷ *Quality* here means *profession*. " I am so much enamoured of Othello, that I am even willing to endure all the inconveniences incident to a *military life*, and to attend him to the wars." MALONE.

That *quality* here signifies the *Moorish complexion* of Othello, and not his *military profession*, is obvious from what immediately follows :

" I saw Othello's *visage* in his mind :"

Desdemona, in this speech asserts, that the virtues of Othello had subdued her heart, in spite of his visage ; and that, to his rank and accomplishments as a soldier, she had consecrated her soul and her fortunes.

HENLEY.

⁸ It must raise no wonder, that I loved a man of an appearance so little engaging ; I saw his face only in his mind ; the greatness of his character reconciled me to his form. JOHNSON.

⁹ [Old copies—*defunct*] As this has been hitherto printed and stopped,

But to be free and bounteous to her mind :
And heaven defend² your good souls, that you think

I will

it seems to me a period of as stubborn nonsense as the editors have obtruded upon poor Shakspeare throughout his works. I have by reading *distinēt* for *defunct*, rescued the poet's text from absurdity ; and this I take to be the tenor of what he would say ; " I do not beg her company with me, merely to please myself ; nor to indulge the heat and *affect*s (i. e. affections) of a new-married man, in my own distinct and proper satisfaction ; but to comply with her in her request, and desire, of accompanying me." *Affect*s for *affections*, our author in several other passages uses. THEOBALD.

With that heat and new affections which the indulgence of my appetite has raised and created. This is the meaning of *defunct*, which has made all the difficulty of the passage. WARBURTON.

I do not think that Mr. Theobald's emendation clears the text from embarrassment, though it is with a little imaginary improvement received by Sir T. Hanmer, who reads thus :

*Nor to comply with heat affect*s the young,
In my distinct and proper satisfaction.

Dr. Warburton's explanation is not more satisfactory: what made the difficulty will continue to make it. I read,

———— *I beg it not,*
To please the palate of my appetite,
*Nor to comply with heat (the young affect*s
In me defunct) and proper satisfaction ;
But to be free and bounteous to her mind.

*Affect*s stands here, not for love, but for passions, for that by which any thing is affected. *I ask it not*, says he, *to please appetite, or satisfy loose desires*, the passions of youth which I have now out-lived, or for any particular gratification of myself, but merely that I may indulge the wishes of my wife.

Mr. Upton had, before me, changed *my* to *me*; but he has printed young *effect*s, not seeming to know that *affect*s could be a noun.

JOHNSON.

I would venture to make the two last lines change places.

———— *I therefore beg it not,*
To please the palate of my appetite,
*Nor to comply with heat, the young affect*s ;
But to be free and bounteous to her mind,
In my defunct and proper satisfaction.

And would then recommend it to consideration, whether the word *defunct* (which would be the only remaining difficulty,) is not capable of a signification, drawn from the primitive sense of its Latin original, which would very well agree with the context. TYRWHITT.

By YOUNG *affect*s, the poet clearly means those " YOUTHFUL lusts"
[τας ΝΕΩΤΕΡΙΚΑΣ επιθυμίας, cupiditates rei novæ, thence JUVENILES,
and

I will your serious and great business scant,
 For she is with me: No, when light-wing'd toys
 Of feather'd Cupid feel with wanton dullness
 My speculative and active instruments,³
 That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
 Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
 And all indign and base adversities
 Make head against my estimation!

Duke. Be it as you shall privately determine,
 Either for her stay, or going: the affair cries—haste,
 And speed must answer it; you must hence to-night.

Des. To-night, my lord?

Duke. This night.

Oth. With all my heart.

Duke. At nine i'the morning here we'll meet again.
 Othello, leave some officer behind,
 And he shall our commission bring to you;
 With such things else of quality and respect,
 As doth import you.

Oth.

and therefore EFFRENES, cupiditates,] which St. Paul admonishes Timothy to fly from, and the Romans to MORTIFY. HENLEY.

For the emendation now offered, [*disjunct*] I am responsible. Some emendation is absolutely necessary, and this appears to me the least objectionable of those which have been proposed.

Proper is here and in other places used for *peculiar*. In this play we have *unproper* beds; not *peculiar* to the rightful owner, but *common* to him and others. MALONE.

Sir Thomas Hanmer's *distinct* appears to me as apposite a change as Mr. Malone's synonymous *disjunct*, I have placed the former in our text, though perhaps the old reading ought not to have been disturbed, as in the opinion of more than one critick it has been satisfactorily explained by Dr. Johnson and Mr. Henley. STEEVENS.

² To defend, is to forbid. STEEVENS.

³ Thus the folio, except that instead of *active instruments*, it has *offic'd instrument*. MALONE.

Speculative instruments, in Shakspeare's language, are the eyes; and *active instruments*, the hands and feet.

To *feel* is to close the eyelids of a hawk by running a thread through them. As it is here metaphorically used, it applies very properly to the *speculative instruments*; but *foils*, the reading of the quarto, agrees better with *active instruments*.

Wanton dulness is dulness arising from wanton indulgences. MALONE.

Oth. Please your grace, my ancient;
A man he is of honesty, and trust;
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good grace shall think
To be sent after me.

Duke. Let it be so.—
Good night to every one.—And, noble signior,
[*To BRABANTIO.*

If virtue no delighted beauty lack,⁴
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

1. Sen. Adieu, brave Moor! use Desdemona well.

Bra. Look to her, Moor; have a quick eye to see;
She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.

[*Exeunt Duke, Senators, Officers, &c.*

Oth. My life upon her faith.—Honest Iago,
My Desdemona must I leave to thee:
I pr'ythee, let thy wife attend on her;
And bring them after in the best advantage.⁵—
Come, Desdemona; I have but an hour
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,
To spend with thee: we must obey the time.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA.*

Rod. Iago.

Iago. What say'st thou, noble heart?

Rod. What will I do, think'st thou?

Iago. Why, go to bed, and sleep.

Rod. I will incontinently drown myself.

Iago. Well, if thou dost, I shall never love thee after it.
Why, thou silly gentleman!

Rod. It is silliness to live, when to live is a torment: and
then have we a prescription to die, when death is our
physician.

Iago. O villainous! I have look'd upon the world for
four

⁴ The meaning, I believe, is, if virtue comprehends every thing in itself, then your virtuous son-in-law of course is beautiful: he has that beauty which delights every one. *Delighted*, for *delighting*; Shakspeare often uses the active and passive participles indiscriminately. Of this practice I have already given many instances. STEEVENS.

Delighted is used by Shakspeare in the sense of *delighting*, or *delightful*.
TYRWHITT.

⁵ Fairest opportunity. JOHNSON.

four times seven years:⁶ and since I could distinguish a benefit and an injury, I never found a man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say, I would drown myself for the love of a Guinea-hen,⁷ I would change my humanity with a baboon.

Rod. What should I do? I confess, it is my shame to be so fond; but it is not in virtue to amend it.

Iago. Virtue? a fig! 'tis in ourselves, that we are thus, or thus. Our bodies are our gardens; to the which, our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce; set hyssop, and weed up thyme; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many; either to have it steril with idleness, or manured with industry; why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: But we have reason, to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this, that you call—love, to be a sect, or scion.⁸

Rod. It cannot be.

Iago. It is merely a lust of the blood, and a permission of the will. Come, be a man: Drown thyself? drown cats, and

⁶ From this passage Iago's age seems to be ascertained; and it corresponds with the account in the novel on which *Othello* is founded, where he is described as a young, handsome man. The French translator of Shakspeare is however of opinion, that Iago here only speaks of those years of his life in which he had looked on the world with an eye of observation. But it would be difficult to assign a reason why he should mention the precise term of *twenty-eight* years; or to account for his knowing so accurately when his understanding arrived at maturity, and the operation of his sagacity, and his observations on mankind, commenced.

That Iago meant to say he was but twenty-eight years old, is clearly ascertained, by his marking particularly, though indefinitely, a period *within that time*, [“and since I could distinguish,” &c.] when he began to make observations on the characters of men. MALONE.

⁷ A showy bird with fine feathers. JOHNSON.

A *Guinea-hen* was anciently the cant term for a prostitute.

STEEVENS.

⁸ Thus the folio and quarto. A *sect* is what the more modern gardeners call a *cutting*. The modern editors read—a *set*. STEEVENS.

and blind puppies. I have profess'd me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable roughness; I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow these wars; defeat⁸ thy favour with an usurped beard; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be, that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor,—put money in thy purse;—nor, he his to her: it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration; ⁹—put but money in thy purse.—These Moors are changeable in their wills;—fill thy purse with money: the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts,² shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth:

⁸ To defeat, is to undo, to change. JOHNSON.

Defeat is from *defaire*, Fr. to undo. Of the use of this word I have already given several instances. STEEVENS.

Favour here means that combination of features which gives the face its distinguishing character. *Defeat*, from *defaire*, in French, signifies to unmake, decompose, or give a different appearance to, either by taking away something, or adding. Thus, in *Don Quixote*, Cardenio *defeated* his *favour* by cutting off his beard, and the Barber his, by putting one on. The beard which Mr. Ashton *usurped* when he escaped from the Tower, gave so different an appearance to his face, that he passed through his guards without the least suspicion. HENLEY.

⁹ There seems to be an opposition of terms here intended, which has been lost in transcription. We may read, *it was a violent conjunction, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration*; or, what seems to me preferable, *it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequel*. JOHNSON.

I believe the poet uses *sequestration* for *sequel*. He might conclude that it was immediately derived from *sequor*. *Sequestration*, however, may mean no more than *separation*. So, in this play—"a sequester from liberty. STEEVENS.

Surely *sequestration* was used in the sense of *separation* only, or in modern language, *parting*. *Their passion began with violence, and it shall end as quickly, of which a separation will be the consequence*. A total and voluntary *sequestration* necessarily includes the cessation or end of affection.

² At *Tonquin* the insect *locusts* are considered as a great delicacy, not only by the poor but by the rich; and are sold in the markets, as larks and quails are in Europe. It may be added, that the Levitical law permits four sorts of them to be eaten. STEEVENS.

It appears from *Dillon's Voyage to the East-Indies*, 1698, that "the Negroes eat them, to revenge themselves, as they say, upon their carcasses, for the evils they make them endure; and I, (adds the writer,) have

youth : when she is fated with his body, she will find the error of her choice.—She must have change, she must : therefore put money in thy purse.—If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst : If sanctimony and a frail vow, betwixt an erring barbarian³ and a super-subtle Venetian, be not too hard for my wits, and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her ; therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself ! it is clean out of the way : seek thou rather to be hang'd in compassing thy joy, than to be drown'd and go without her.

Rod. Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue ?

Iago. Thou art sure of me ;—Go, make money :—I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor :

have seen some French eat them, with as good an appetite as the Blacks, who will affirm, that they are of a *very good taste*." RITSON.

An anonymous correspondent informs me, that the fruit of the locust-tree, (which, I believe, is here meant,) is a long black pod, that contains the seeds, among which there is a very sweet luscious juice of much the same consistency as fresh honey. This (says he) I have often tasted.

STEEVENS.

That viscous substance which the pod of the locust contains, is, perhaps, of all others, the most *luscious*. From its likeness to honey, in consistency and flavour, the *locust* is called the *honey-tree* also. Its seeds, enclosed in a long pod, lie buried in the juice. HENLEY.

Mr. Daines Barrington suggests to me, that Shakspeare perhaps had the third chapter of St. Matthew's gospel in his thoughts, in which we are told that John the Baptist lived in the wilderness on *locusts* and wild *honey*.

MALONE.

³ We should read *errant* ; that is, a vagabond, one that has no house nor country. WARBURTON.

Sir T. Hammer reads, *arrant*. *Erring* is as well as either. JOHNSON.

An *erring Barbarian* perhaps means a *rover* from *Barbary*. He had before said, " You'll have your daughter cover'd with a *Barbary* horse."

MALONE.

I rather conceive *barbarian* to be here used with its primitive sense of—a *foreigner*. STEEVENS.

The word *erring* is sufficiently explained by a passage in the first scene of the play, where Roderigo tells Brabantio that his daughter was

" Tying her duty, beauty, wit and fortune,

" To an extravagant and wheeling stranger."

Erring is the same as *erraticus* in Latin. M. MASON.

Moor: My cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason: Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, and me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time, which will be delivered. Traverse;⁴ go; provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

Rod. Where shall we meet i'the morning?

Iago. At my lodging.

Rod. I'll be with thee betimes.

Iago. Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

Rod. What say you?

Iago. No more of drowning, do you hear.

Rod. I am changed. I'll sell all my land.

Iago. Go to; farewell: put money enough in your purse.

[*Exit RODERIGO.*]

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe,⁵
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not, if't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do, as if for surety.⁶ He holds me well;⁷
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man: Let me see now;
To get his place, and to plume up my will;
A double knavery,—How? how?—Let me see:—
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear,
'That he is too familiar with his wife:—
He hath a person, and a smooth dispose,
To be suspected; fram'd to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest, that but seem to be so;

And

⁴ This was an ancient military word of command. STEEVENS.

⁵ *Woodcock* is the term generally used by Shakspeare to denote an insignificant fellow; but Iago is more sarcastick, and compares his dupe to a smaller and meaner bird of almost the same shape. STEEVENS.

⁶ That is, "I will act as if I were certain of the fact." M. MASON.

⁷ i. e. esteems me. So, in *St. Matt.* xxi. 26: "—— all *beld* John as a prophet." REED.

And will as tenderly be led by the nose,
 As asses are.
 I have't ;—it is engender'd :—Hell and night
 Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. [*Exit.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

*A Sea-port Town in Cyprus.*⁸ *A Platform.*

Enter MONTANO and two Gentlemen.

Mon. What from the cape can you discern at sea ?

1. Gent. Nothing at all : it is a high-wrought flood ;
 I cannot, 'twixt the heaven⁹ and the main,
 Descry a sail.

Mon. Methinks, the wind hath spoke aloud at land ;
 A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements :
 If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,
 What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,²

Can

⁸ All the modern editors, following Mr. Rowe, have supposed the capital of Cyprus to be the place where the scene of *Othello* lies during four acts : but this could not have been Shakspeare's intention ; NICOSSIA, the capital city of Cyprus, being situated nearly in the center of the island, and thirty miles distant from the sea. The principal sea-port town of Cyprus was FAMAGUSTA ; where there was formerly a strong fort and commodious haven, the only one of any magnitude in the island ; and there undoubtedly the scene should be placed. " Neere unto the haven (says Knolles,) standeth an old CASTLE, with four towers after the ancient manner of building." To this castle, we find Othello presently repairs. MALONE.

⁹ Thus the folio ; but perhaps our author wrote—the heavens. The quarto, 1622, probably by a printer's error, has—*haven*. STEEVENS.

The reading of the folio affords a bolder image ; but the article prefixed strongly supports the original copy ; for applied to *beaven*, it is extremely awkward.

Of the *haven* of Famagusta, which was defended from the main by two great rocks, at the distance of forty paces from each other, Shakspeare might have found a particular account in Knolles's *History of the Turks*, ad ann. 1570, p. 863. MALONE.

² Thus the folio. The quarto reads :

" — when the huge mountain melts." STEEVENS.

Can hold the mortise? what shall we hear of this?

2. *Gent.* A segregation of the Turkish fleet:
For do but stand upon the foaming shore,
'The chiding billow seems to pelt the clouds;
'The wind-shak'd surge, with high and monstrous main,
Seems to cast water on the burning bear,
And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole:³
I never did like molestation view
On th' enchain'd flood.

Mon. If that the Turkish fleet
Be not inshelter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd;
It is impossible they bear it out.

Enter a third Gentleman.

3. *Gent.* News, lords! our wars are done;
The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks,
That their designment halts: A noble ship of Venice
Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance
On most part of their fleet.

Mon. How! is this true?

3. *Gent.* The ship is here put in,
A Veronesé; Michael Cassio,⁴

Lieutenant

The quarto is surely the better reading; it conveys a more natural image, more poetically expressed. Every man who has been on board a vessel in the Bay of Biscay, or in any very high sea, must know that the vast billows seem to melt away from the ship, not on it. M. MASON.

I would not wilfully differ from Mr. M. Mason concerning the value of these readings; yet surely the *mortise* of a ship is in greater peril when the watry mountain melts *upon* it, than when it melts *from* it. When the waves retreat from a vessel, it is safe. When they break over it, its structure is endangered. STEEVENS.

³ Alluding to the star *Arctophylax*. JOHNSON.

⁴ [Old copies—*Veronessa*.] Mr. Heath is of opinion, that the poet intended to inform us, that Othello's lieutenant Cassio was of Verona, an inland city of the Venetian state; and adds, that the editors have not been pleased to say what kind of ship is here denoted by a *Veronessa*. By a *Veronessa*, or *Veronesé*, (for the Italian pronunciation must be retained, otherwise the measure will be defective,) a ship of Verona is denoted; as we say to this day of ships in the river, such a one is a *Dutchman*, a *Jamaica-man*, &c. I subjoin Mr. Warton's note, as a confirmation of my own. STEEVENS.

The

Lieutenant to the warlike Moor, Othello,
Is come on shore: the Moor himself's at sea,
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

Mon. I am glad on't; 'tis a worthy governor.

3. *Gent.* But this same Cassio,—though he speak of comfort,

Touching the Turkish loss,—yet he looks sadly,
And prays the Moor be safe; for they were parted

With

The true reading is *Veronesé*, pronounced as a quadrisyllable:

— The ship is here put in,

A *Veronesé*.—

It was common to introduce *Italian* words, and in their proper pronunciation then familiar.

Mr. Heath observes, that “the editors have not been pleased to inform us what kind of ship is here denoted by the name of a *Veroneffa*.” But even supposing that *Veroneffa* is the true reading, there is no sort of difficulty. He might just as well have inquired, what kind of a ship is a *Hamburgher*. This is exactly a parallel form. For it is not the species of the ship which is implied in this appellation. Our critick adds, “the poet had not a ship in his thoughts.—He intended to inform us, that Othello's lieutenant, Cassio, was of *Verona*. We should certainly read:

— The ship is here put in.

A Veronese, Michael Cassio, (&c.)

Is come on shore.”—

This regulation of the lines is ingenious. But I agree with Sir T. Hanmer, and I think it appears from many parts of the play, that Cassio was a Florentine. In this speech, the *third gentleman*, who brings the news of the wreck of the Turkish fleet, returns his tale, and relates the circumstances more distinctly. In his *former* speech he says, “A noble ship of Venice saw the distress of the Turks.” And here he adds, “The very ship is just now put into our port, and she is a *Veronesé*.” That is, a ship fitted out or furnished by the people of Verona, a city of the Venetian state. T. WARTON.

I believe we are all wrong. *Verona* is an inland city. Every inconsistency may, however, be avoided, if we read—*The Veroneffa*, i. e. the name of the ship is the *Veroneffa*. Verona, however, might be obliged to furnish ships towards the general defence of Italy. STEEVENS.

The emendation proposed by Mr. Steevens is acute; but Shakspeare's acquaintance with the topography of Italy (as appears from *The Tempest*) was very imperfect. HENLEY.

This ship has been already described as a ship of Venice. It is now called “a *Veronesé*,” that is, a ship belonging to and furnished by the inland city of Verona, for the use of the Venetian state; and newly arrived from Venice. *Commonwealth of Venice*, 1599. MALONE.

With foul and violent tempest.

Mon.

'Pray heaven he be ;

For I have serv'd him, and the man commands
Like a full soldier.⁵ Let's to the sea-side, ho !

As well to see the vessel that's come in,
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello ;
Even till we make the main, and the aerial blue,
An indistinct regard.

Gent.

Come, let's do so ;

For every minute is expectancy
Of more arrivance.

Enter CASSIO.

Cas. Thanks to the valiant of this warlike isle,
That so approve the Moor ; O, let the heavens
Give him defence against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea !

Mon. Is he well shipp'd ?

Cas. His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot
Of very expert and approv'd allowance ;⁶
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure.⁷

[*Within.*]

A fail, a fail, a fail !

Enter

⁵ Like a complete soldier. MALONE.

⁶ I read,

Very expert, and of approv'd allowance. JOHNSON.

Expert and approv'd allowance is put for *allow'd and approv'd expertness*. This mode of expression is not unfrequent in Shakspeare.

STEEVENS.

⁷ I do not understand these lines. I know not how *hope* can be *surfeited to death*, that is, *can be increased, till it be destroyed* ; nor what it is *to stand in bold cure* ; or why *hope* should be considered as a disease. In the copies there is no variation. Shall we read :

Therefore my *fears*, not *surfeited to death*,
Stand in bold cure ?

This is better, but it is not well. Shall we strike a bolder stroke, and read thus ?

Therefore my hopes, not *surfeited to death*,
Stand *bold, not sure.* JOHNSON.

Presumptuous hopes, which have no foundation in probability, may poetically be said to surfeit themselves to death, or forward their own dissolution.

Enter another Gentleman.

Cas. What noise?

4. *Gent.* The town is empty; on the brow o'the sea
Stand ranks of people, and they cry—a fail.

Cas. My hopes do shape him for the governour.

2. *Gent.* They do discharge their shot of courtesy;

[*Guns heard.*

Our friends, at least.

Cas. I pray you, sir, go forth,
And give us truth who 'tis that is arriv'd.

2. *Gent.* I shall.

[*Exit.*

Mon. But, good lieutenant, is your general wiv'd?

Cas. Most fortunately: he hath achiev'd a maid
That paragon's description, and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And in the essential vesture of creation,
Does bear all excellency.⁸—How now? who has put in?

Re-enter

dissolution. To *stand in bold cure*, is to erect themselves in confidence of being fulfilled.

In bold cure means, in confidence of being cured. STEEVENS.

Dr. Johnson says, “he knows not why *hope* should be considered as a disease.” But it is not *hope* which is here described as a disease; those misgiving apprehensions which diminish hope, are in fact the disease, and hope itself is the patient.

A surfeit being a disease arising from an *excessive* overcharge of the stomach, the poet with his usual licence uses it for any species of *excess*.—Therefore, says Cassio, my hopes, which, though faint and sickly with apprehension, are not totally destroyed by an excess of despondency, erect themselves with some degree of confidence that they will be relieved, by the safe arrival of Othello, from those ill-divining fears under which they now languish.

The word *surfeit* having occurred to Shakspeare, led him to consider such a hope as Cassio entertained, not a sanguine, but a faint and languid hope, (“sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,”) as a *disease*, and to talk of its *cure*. MALONE.

I believe that Solomon, upon this occasion, will be found the best interpreter: “*Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.*” HENLEY.

⁸ The author seems to use *essential*, for *exstent*, *real*. She excels the praises of invention, says he, and in *real* qualities, with which *creation* has invested her, bears all excellency. JOHNSON.

Such

Re-enter second Gentleman.

2. *Gent.* 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

Cas. He has had most favourable and happy speed :

Tempests

Such is the reading of the quartos; for which the folio has this :

And in the essential vesture of creation

Do's tyre the ingeniuier.

Which I explain thus,

Does tire the ingenious verse.

This is the best reading, and that which the author substituted in his revival. JOHNSON.

The reading of the quarto is so flat and unpoetical, when compared with that sense which seems meant to have been given in the folio, that I heartily wish some emendation could be hit on, which might entitle it to a place in the text. I believe the word *tire* was not introduced to signify—to *fatigue*, but to *attire*, to *dress*. The verb *to attire*, is often so abbreviated.

The essential vesture of creation tempts me to believe it was so used on the present occasion. I would read something like this :

And in the essential vesture of creation

Does tire the ingenuous virtue.

i. e. invests her artless virtue in the fairest form of earthly substance.

It may, however, be observed, that the word *ingener* did not anciently signify *one who manages the engines or artillery of an army*, but any *ingenious person*, any *master of liberal science*. *Ingener*, therefore may be the true reading of this passage. STEEVENS.

Perhaps the words intended in the folio, were,

Does tire the ingene ever.

Ingene is used for *ingenium* by Puttenham, in his *Arte of Poesie*, 1589: If *tire* was used in the sense of *weary*, then *ingener* must have been used for the ingenious person who should attempt to enumerate the merits of Desdemona. MALONE.

The reading of the folio, though incorrectly spelled, appears to have been,

Does tire the engineer ;

which is preferable to either of the proposed amendments ; and the meaning of the passage would then be, “ One whose real perfections were so excellent, that to blazon them would exceed the abilities of the ablest masters.”

The sense attributed to the word *tire*, according to this reading, is perfectly agreeable to the language of poetry.

The objection to the reading of *inginer*, is, that although we find the words *ingine*, *inginer*, and *inginous* in Jonson, they are not the language of Shakspeare ; and I believe indeed that Jonson is singular in the use of them. M. MASON.

Whoever

Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
 The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands,—
 Traitors ensteep'd⁹ to clog the guiltless keel,
 As having sense of beauty, do omit
 Their moral natures,² letting go safely by
 The divine Desdemona.

Mon.

What is she?

Cas. She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,
 Left in the conduct of the bold Iago;
 Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts,
 A se'nnight's speed.—Great Jove,³ Othello guard,
 And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath;
 That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,
 Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,

Give

Whoever shall reject uncommon expressions in the writings of Shakspeare, because they differ either from the exact rules of orthography, or from the unsettled mode of spelling them by other writers, will be found to deprive him no less of his beauties, than that the ornithologist would the peacock, who should cut out every eye of his train because it was either not circular, or else varied from some imaginary standard.—*Ingenieur* is no doubt of the same import with *ingener* or *ingeneer*, though perhaps differently written by Shakspeare in the reference to *ingenious*, and to distinguish it from *ingeneer*, which he has elsewhere used in a *military* sense. Mr. M. Mason's objection, that it is not the language of Shakspeare, is more than begging the question; and to affirm that Jonson is singular in the use of *ingine*, *inginer*, and *inginous*, is as little to the purpose. For we not only have those expressions in other writers, but others from the same root, as *ingene*, *engene*, &c. in Holinshed, and Sir T. Moore; and Daniel uses *ingeniate*. HENLEY.

⁹ Thus the folio and one of the quartos. The first copy reads—*enscerped*, of which every reader may make what he pleases. Perhaps *escerped* was an old English word borrowed from the French *escarpé*, which Shakspeare not finding congruous to the image of clogging the keel, afterwards changed.

I once thought that the poet had written—Traitors *enscarf'd*, i. e. muffled in their robes, and this agrees better with the idea of a traitor: yet whatever is gained one way is lost another. Our poet too often adopts circumstances from every image that arose in his mind, and employing them without attention to the propriety of their union, his metaphorical expressions become inextricably confused. STEEVENS.

² i. e. their *deadly*, *destructive* natures. REED.

³ For this absurdity I have not the smallest doubt that the Master of the Revels, and not our poet, is answerable. See *The Historical Account of the English Stage*. MALONE.

Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits,
And bring all Cyprus comfort!—O, behold,

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, and Attendants.

The riches of the ship is come on shore!
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees:—
Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round!

Des. I thank you, valiant Cassio.
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

Cas. He is not yet arriv'd; nor know I aught
But that he's well, and will be shortly here.

Des. O, but I fear;—How lost you company?

Cas. The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship: But, hark! a sail.

[Cry within. A sail, a sail! Then guns heard.]

2. Gent. They give their greeting to the citadel;
This likewise is a friend.

Cas. See for the news.—

[Exit Gentleman.]

Good ancient, you are welcome;—Welcome, mistress:—

[To EMILIA.]

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners; 'tis my breeding
That gives me this bold show of courtesy. *[Kissing her.]*

Iago. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips,
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You'd have enough.

Des. Alas, she has no speech.

Iago. In faith, too much;
I find it still, when I have list to sleep:
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

Emil. You have little cause to say so.

Iago. Come on, come on; you are pictures out of doors,
Bells in your parlours, wild cats in your kitchens,

Saints in your injuries,⁴ devils being offended,
Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds.

Des. O, fie upon thee, slanderer!

Iago. Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk;
You rise to play, and go to bed to work.

Emil. You shall not write my praise.

Iago. No, let me not.

Des. What would'st thou write of me, if thou should'st
praise me?

Iago. O gentle lady, do not put me to't;
For I am nothing, if not critical.⁵

Des. Come on, assay:—There's one gone to the har-
bour?

Iago. Ay, madam.

Des. I am not merry; but I do beguile
The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.—
Come, how would'st thou praise me?

Iago. I am about it; but, indeed, my invention
Comes from my pate, as birdlime does from frize,
It plucks out brains and all: But my muse labours,
And thus she is deliver'd.

If she be fair and wise,—fairness, and wit,
The one's for use, the other useth it.

Des. Well prais'd! How if she be black and witty?

Iago. If she be black, and thereto have a wit,
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

Des. Worse and worse.

Emil. How, if fair and foolish?

Iago. She never yet was foolish that was fair;⁶
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

Des. These are old fond paradoxes, to makes fools laugh
i'the

⁴ When you have a mind to do injuries, you put on an air of sanctity.
JOHNSON.

⁵ That is, *censorious*. JOHNSON.

⁶ We may read:

She *ne'er* was yet *so* foolish that was fair,

But even her folly help'd her to an heir.

Yet, I believe, the common reading to be right: the law makes the
power of cohabitation a proof that a man is not a *natural*; therefore, since
the foolishlest woman, if *pretty*, may have a child, no *pretty* woman is
ever foolish. JOHNSON.

i'the alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou for her that's foul and foolish?

Iago. There's none so foul, and foolish thereunto,
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

Des. O heavy ignorance!—thou praisest the worst best.
But what praise could'st thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed? one, that, in the authority of her merit, did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?⁷

Iago. She that was ever fair, and never proud;
Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;
Never lack'd gold, and yet went never gay;
Fled from her wish, and yet said,—*now I may*;
She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly;
She that in wisdom never was so frail,
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;⁸
She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind,
See suitors following, and not look behind;
She was a wight,—if ever such wight were,—

Des. To do what?

Iago. To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.⁹

Des. O most lame and impotent conclusion!—Do not
learn

⁷ The sense is this, one that was so conscious of her own merit, and of the authority her character had with every one, that she durst venture to call upon malice itself to vouch for her. This was some commendation. And the character only of clearest virtue; which could force malice, even against its nature, to do justice. *WARBURTON.*

To put on the vouch of malice, is to assume a character vouched by the testimony of malice itself. *JOHNSON.*

To put on is to provoke, to incite. *STEEVENS.*

⁸ i. e. to exchange a delicacy for coarser fare. *STEEVENS.*

The word *frail* in the preceding line shews that *vians* were not alone in his thoughts. *MALONE.*

A *frail* judgement, means only a weak one. I suspect no equivocation. *STEEVENS.*

⁹ After enumerating the perfections of a woman, Iago adds, that if ever there was such a one as he had been describing, she was, at the best, of no other use, than to suckle children, and keep the accounts of a household. The expressions to suckle fools, and chronicle small beer, are only instances of the want of natural affection, and the predominance of a critical censoriousness in Iago, which he allows himself to be possessed of, where he says, *O! I am nothing, if not critical.* *STEEVENS.*

learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband.—How say you, Cassio? is he not a most profane² and liberal³ counsellor?

Cas. He speaks home, madam; you may relish him more in the soldier, than in the scholar.

Iago. [*Aside.*] He takes her by the palm: Ay, well said, whisper: with as little a web as this, will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I will gyve thee⁴ in thine own courtship. You say true; 'tis so, indeed: if such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kiss'd your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the fir in.⁵ Very good; well kiss'd! an excellent courtesy!⁶ 'tis so, indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips? would, they were clyster-pipes for your sake!—[*Trumpet.*] The Moor,—I know his trumpet.

Cas. 'Tis truly so.

Des. Let's meet him, and receive him.

Cas. Lo, where he comes!

Enter OTHELLO, and Attendants.

Oth. O my fair warrior!

Des. My dear Othello!

Oth.

² Gross of language, of expression broad and brutal. So Brabantio, in the first act, calls Iago *profane* wretch. JOHNSON.

³ *Liberal* for *licentious*. WARBURTON.

Counsellor seems to mean, not so much a man that *gives counsel*, as one that discourses fearlessly and volubly. A talker. JOHNSON.

Counsellor is here used in the common acceptation. Desdemona refers to the answers she had received from Iago, and particularly her last.

HENLEY.

⁴ i. e. catch, shackle. POPE.

The first quarto reads—I will *catch* you in your own *courtesies*; the second quarto—I will *catch* you in your own courtship. The folio as it is in the text. STEEVENS.

⁵ That is, to show your good breeding and gallantry. HENLEY.

⁶ Spoken when Cassio kisses his hand, and Desdemona courtesies.

JOHNSON.

The poet probably meant only to speak of Cassio, while kissing his hand. "Well kiss'd! an excellent courtesy!" i. e. an excellent salute. *Courtesy*, in the sense of an obeisance or salute, was in Shakspeare's time applied to men as well as women. MALONE.

Oth. It gives me wonder great as my content,
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,
Olympus-high; and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

Des. The heavens forbid,
But that our loves and comforts should increase,
Even as our days do grow!

Oth. Amen to that, sweet powers!—
I cannot speak enough of this content,
It stops me here; it is too much of joy:
And this, and this, the greatest discords be, [Kissing her.
That e'er our hearts shall make!

Iago O, you are well tun'd now!
But I'll set down⁷ the pegs that make this musick,
As honest as I am. [Aside.

Oth. Come, let's to the castle.—
News, friends;⁸ our wars are done, the Turks are drown'd,
How do our old acquaintance of this isle?—
Honey, you shall be well desir'd in Cyprus,⁹
I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
I prattle out of fashion,² and I dote

In

⁷ Thus the old copies, for which the modern editors, following Mr. Pope, have substituted—*let down*. But who can prove that to *set down* was not the language of Shakspeare's time, when a viol was spoken of?—To *set* formerly signified to *tune*, though it is no longer used in that sense.

MALONE.

To "*set down*" has this meaning in no other part of our author's works. However, *virtus post nummos*: we have secured the phrase, and the exemplification of it may follow when it will. STEEVENS.

⁸ The modern editors read (after Mr. Rowe) *Now* friends. I would observe once for all, that (in numberless instances in this play, as well as in others) where my predecessors had silently and without reason made alterations, I have as silently restored the old readings. STEEVENS.

⁹ i. e. much solicited by invitation. STEEVENS.

² Out of method, without any settled order of discourse. JOHNSON.

In mine own comforts.—I pr'ythee, good Iago,
Go to the bay, and disembark my coffers :
Bring thou the master³ to the citadel ;
He is a good one, and his worthiness
Does challenge much respect.—Come, Desdemona,
Once more well met at Cyprus.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants.*]

Iago. Do thou meet me presently at the harbour. Come hither. If thou be'st valiant as (they say) base men, being in love, have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them,—list me. The lieutenant to-night watches on the court of guard :⁴—First, I must tell thee this—Desdemona is directly in love with him.

Rod. With him ! why 'tis not possible.

Iago. Lay thy finger—thus,⁵ and let thy soul be instructed. Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging, and telling her fantastical lies : And will she love him still for prating ? let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed ; and what delight shall she have to look on the devil ? When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be,—again to inflame it, and to give satiety a fresh appetite,—loveliness in favour ; sympathy in years, manners, and beauties ; all which the Moor is defective in : Now, for want of these required conveniences, her delicate tendernefs will find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor ; very nature will instruct her in it, and compel her to some second choice. Now, fir, this granted, (as it is a most pregnant and unforced position,)

³ Dr. Johnson supposed, that by the *master* was meant the *pilot* of the ship, and indeed had high authority for this supposition ; for our poet himself seems to have confounded them. See Act III. sc. ii. l. 1. But the master is a distinct person, and has the principal command, and care of the navigation of the ship, under the captain, where there is a captain ; and in chief, where there is none. The pilot is employed only in navigating the ship into or out of port. MALONE.

“ The *master* (says Smith in his *Sea-grammar*, 1627) and his mates, are to direct the course, command all the sailors, for steering, trimming, and sailing the ship,” &c. STEEVENS.

⁴ i. e. the place where the guard musters. STEEVENS.

⁵ On thy mouth, to stop it while thou art listening to a wiser man.

JOHNSON.

tion,) who stands so eminently in the degree of this fortune, as Cassio does? a knave very voluble; no further conscionable, than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing of his salt and most hidden loose affection? why, none; why, none: A slippery and subtle knave; a finder out of occasions; that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself: A devilish knave! besides, the knave is handsome, young; and hath all those requisites in him, that folly and green minds⁶ look after: A pestilent complete knave; and the woman hath found him already.

Rod. I cannot believe that in her; she is full of most blest'd condition.⁷

Iago. Blest'd fig's end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes: if she had been blest'd, she would never have loved the Moor: Blest'd pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

Rod. Yes, that I did? but that was but courtesy.

Iago. Lechery, by this hand; an index, and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts.⁸ They met so near with their lips, that their breaths embraced together. Villainous thoughts, Roderigo! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion: Pish!—But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay't upon you: Cassio knows you not;—I'll not be far from you: Do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting⁹ his discipline; or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

Rod. Well.

Iago. Sir, he is rash, and very sudden² in choler; and, haply, with his truncheon may strike at you: Provoke him, that he may: for, even out of that, will I cause these of Cyprus

⁶ Minds unripe, minds not yet fully formed. JOHNSON.

⁷ Qualities, disposition of mind. JOHNSON.

⁸ That *indexes* were formerly *prefixed* to books, appears from a passage in *Troilus and Cressida*. MALONE.

⁹ Throwing a slur upon his discipline. JOHNSON.

² *Sudden*, is precipitately violent. JOHNSON.

Cyprus to mutiny; whose qualification³ shall come into no true taste again, but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires, by the means I shall then have to prefer them;⁴ and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

Rod. I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

Iago. I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel: I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

Rod. Adieu. [Exit.

Iago. That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it; That she loves him, 'tis apt, and of great credit: The Moor—howbeit that I endure him not,— Is of a constant, loving, noble nature; And, I dare think, he'll prove to Desdemona A most dear husband. Now I do love her too; Not out of absolute lust (though, peradventure, I stand accountant for as great a sin,) But partly led to diet my revenge, For that I do suspect the lusty Moor Hath leap'd into my seat: the thought whereof Doth, like a poisonous mineral,⁵ gnaw my inwards; And nothing can or shall content my soul, Till I am even with him, wife for wife; Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor At least into a jealousy so strong That judgement cannot cure. Which thing to do,— If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash⁶ For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,

I'll

³ Whose resentment shall nor be so *qualified* or *tempered*, as to be *well tasted*, as not to retain *some bitterness*. The phrase is harsh, at least to our ears. JOHNSON.

Perhaps *qualification* means *fitness to preserve good order*, or *the regularity of military discipline*. STEEVENS.

⁴ i. e. to *advance* them. MALONE.

⁵ This is philosophical. Mineral poisons kill by corrosion.

JOHNSON.

⁶ The quarto, 1622, has—*crush*, the folio reads—*trace*, an apparent corruption of—*trash*; for as to the idea of *crushing a dog*, to prevent him from *quick hunting*, it is too ridiculous to be defended.

To

I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip ; ⁷
 Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb, ⁸—
 For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too ;
 Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
 For making him egregiously an ass,
 And practising upon his peace and quiet
 Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confus'd ;
 Knavery's plain face is never seen, ⁹ till us'd. [Exit.]

S C E N E II.

A Street.

Enter a Herald, with a proclamation : people following.

Her. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere ² perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into

To *trash*, is still a hunter's phrase, and signifies to fasten a weight on the neck of a dog, when his speed is superior to that of his companions.

This sense of the word—*trash* has been so repeatedly confirmed to me by those whom I cannot suspect of wanting information relative to their most favourite pursuits, that I do not hesitate to throw off the load of unsatisfactory notes with which the passage before us has hitherto been oppressed.

Trash, in the first instance, (though Dr. Warburton would change it into—*brach*,) may be used to signify a worthless hound, as the same term is afterwards employed to describe a worthless female :

“ Gentlemen all, I do suspect this *trash*.”

It is scarce necessary to support the present jingle on the word—*trash*, by examples, it is so much in our author's manner, although his worst.

Stand the putting on, may mean—*does not start too soon after Desdemona*, and so destroy my scheme by injudicious precipitation. But I rather think, these words have reference to the enterprize of provoking Cassio, and will then imply,—*if he has courage enough for the attempt to which I have just incited, or put him on.* STEEVENS.

⁷ A phrase from the art of wrestling. JOHNSON.

⁸ Thus the quarto, and, I think, rightly. *Rank garb*, I believe, means, *grossly*, i. e. *without mincing the matter.* STEEVENS.

The folio reads—in the *right* garb. *Rank*, perhaps, means not only *gross*, but *lascivious.* MALONE.

⁹ An honest man acts upon a plan, and forecasts his designs ; but a knave depends upon temporary and local opportunities, and never knows his own purpose, but at the time of execution. JOHNSON.

² *Mere* in this place signifies *entire.* STEEVENS.

into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him; for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptials: So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open; ³ and there is full liberty of feasting, from this present hour of five, till the bell hath told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus, and our noble general, Othello!
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Hall in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and Attendants.

Oth. Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night:
Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,
Not to out-sport discretion.

Cas. Iago hath direction what to do;
But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye
Will I look to't.

Oth. Iago is most honest.
Michael, good night: To-morrow, with our earliest,
Let me have speech with you.—Come, my dear love;
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;
[*To DESDEMONA.*]

That profit's yet to come 'twixt me and you.—
Good night. [*Exeunt OTH. DES. and Attendants.*]

Enter IAGO.

Cas. Welcome, Iago: We must to the watch.

Iago. Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o'clock:
Our general cast us ⁴ thus early, for the love of his Desde-
mona:

³ i. e. all rooms, or places, in the castle, at which refreshments are prepared, or served out. So, in *Macbeth*:

“Sent forth great largesse to your offices.” STEEVENS.

⁴ That is, *appointed us to our stations*. To cast the play, is, in the style of the theatres, to assign to every actor his proper part. JOHNSON.

We have just now been assured by the Herald, that there was “full liberty of feasting, &c. till eleven.”

Perhaps

mona : whom let us not therefore blame ; he hath not yet made wanton the night with her ; and she is sport for Jove.

Cas. She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago. And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

Cas. Indeed, she is a most fresh and delicate creature.

Iago. What an eye she has ! methinks, it sounds a parley of provocation.

Cas. An inviting eye ; and yet, methinks, right modest.

Iago. And, when she speaks, is it not an alarm⁵ to love ?

Cas. She is, indeed, perfection.⁶

Iago. Well, happiness to their sheets ! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoop of wine, and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants, that would fain have a measure to the health of the black Othello.

Cas. Not to-night, good Iago ; I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking : I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

Iago. O, they are our friends ; but one cup : I'll drink for you.

Cas. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified⁷ too, and, behold, what innovation it makes here : I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Iago. What, man ! 'tis a night of revels ; the gallants desire it.

Cas. Where are they ?

Iago.

Perhaps therefore *cast* us only means dismissed us, or got rid of our company, So, in one of the following scenes : " You are but now *cast* in his mood ;" i. e. *turn'd out of your office in his anger* ; and in the first scene it means to *dismiss*. STEEVENS.

⁵ The voice may sound an alarm more properly than the eye can sound a parley. JOHNSON.

The eye is often said to *speak*. Thus we frequently hear of the language of the eye. Surely that which can talk may, without any violent stretch of the figure be allowed to sound a parley. The folio reads—*parley to provocation*. RITSON.

⁶ In this and the seven short speeches preceding, the decent cha after of Cassio is most powerfully contrasted with that of the licentious Iago.

STEEVENS.

⁷ Silly mixed with water. JOHNSON.

Iago. Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

Cas. I'll do't; but it dislikes me. [Exit CASSIO.]

Iago. If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool, Roderigo,
Whom love has turn'd almost the wrong side outward,
To Desdemona hath to-night carous'd
Potations pottle deep; and he's to watch:
Three lads of Cyprus,—noble swelling spirits,
That hold their honours in a wary distance,
The very elements⁸ of this warlike isle,—
Have I to-night fluster'd with flowing cups,
And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunkards,
Am I to put our Cassio in some action
That may offend the isle:—But here they come;
If consequence do but approve my dream,⁹
My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

Re-enter CASSIO; with him MONTANO, and Gentlemen.

Cas. 'Fore heaven, they have given me a rouse² already.

Mon. Good faith a little one; not past a pint, as I am a folder.³

Iago. Some wine, ho!

And let me the canakin clink, clink;

[Sings.]

And let me the canakin clink:

A soldier's a man;

A life's but a span;

Why then, let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys!

[Wine brought in.]

Cas.

⁸ As quarrelsome as the *discordia semina rerum*; as quick in opposition as fire and water. JOHNSON.

⁹ Every scheme subsisting only in the imagination may be termed a *dream*. JOHNSON.

² A *rouse* appears to be a quantity of liquor rather too large.

STEEVENS.

³ If Montano was Othello's predecessor in the government of Cyprus, (as we are told in the *Personæ Dramatis*,) he is not very characteristi-

Cas. 'Fore heaven, an excellent song.

Iago. I learn'd it in England, where (indeed) they are most potent in potting:⁴ your Dane, your German,⁵ and your swag-bellied Hollander,—Drink, ho!—are nothing to your English.

Cas. Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?⁶

Iago. Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be fill'd.

Cas. To the health of our general.

Mon. I am for it, lieutenant; and I'll do you justice.⁷

Iago. O sweet England!

*King Stephen*⁸ *was a worthy peer,*⁹
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he call'd the tailor—lown.²
He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree:
'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
Then take thine auld cloak about thee.

Some

cally employed in the present scene, where he is tippling with people already *fluster'd*, and encouraging a subaltern officer who commands a midnight guard, to drink to excess. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Les meilleurs buveurs en Angleterre*, is an ancient French proverb.

STEEVENS.

⁵ “Enquire at ordinaries: there must be fallets for the Italian, tooth-picks for the Spaniard, *pots* for the German!” Prologue to Lyly's *Midas*, 1592. MALONE.

⁶ This accomplishment in the English is likewise mentioned by Beaumont and Fletcher in *The Captain*. STEEVENS.

⁷ i. e. Drink as much as you do. STEEVENS.

⁸ These stanzas are taken from an old song, which the reader will find recovered and preserved in a curious work lately printed, entitled, *Relicks of Ancient Poetry*, consisting of old heroick ballads, songs, &c. 3 vols. 12mo. JOHNSON.

⁹ i. e. a worthy fellow. In this sense *peer*, *fere*, and *pbeere*, are often used by the writers of our earliest romances. STEEVENS.

A *worthy peer* is a *worthy lord*, a title frequently bestowed upon kings in our old romances. Spenser constantly uses the word *peer* in this sense. *Pbeere* is in every respect a very different word. RITSON.

² Sorry fellow, paltry wretch. JOHNSON.

Some wine, ho!

Cas. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

Iago. Will you hear it again?

Cas. No; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place, that does those things.—Well,—Heaven's above all; and there be souls that must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

Iago. It's true, good lieutenant.

Cas. For mine own part,—no offence to the general, nor any man of quality,—I hope to be saved.

Iago. And so do I too, lieutenant.

Cas. Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this; let's to our affairs.—Forgive us our sins!—Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk; this is my ancient;—this is my right hand, and this is my left hand:—I am not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

All. Excellent well.

Cas. Why, very well, then: you must not think then that I am drunk. *[Exit.]*

Mon. To the platform, masters; come, let's set the watch.

Iago. You see this fellow, that is gone before;—
He is a soldier, fit to stand by Cæsar
And give direction: and do but see his vice;
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,
The one as long as the other: 'tis pity of him.
I fear, the trust Othello puts him in,
On some odd time of his infirmity,
Will shake this island.

Mon. But is he often thus?

Iago. 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep;
He'll watch the horologe a double set,³
If drink rock not his cradle.

Mon.

³ If he have no drink, he'll keep awake while the clock strikes two rounds, or four-and-twenty hours.

Chaucer uses the word *horologe* in more places than one. JOHNSON.

Mon. It were well,
The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps, he sees it not; or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,
And looks not on his evils; Is not this true?

Enter RODERIGO.

Iago. How now, Roderigo? *[Aside.*
I pray you, after the lieutenant; go. *[Exit RODERIGO.*

Mon. And 'tis great pity, that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place, as his own second,
With one of an ingraft infirmity: ⁴
It were an honest action, to say
So to the Moor.

Iago. Not I, for this fair island:
I do love Cassio well; and would do much
To cure him of this evil. But, hark! what noise?
[Cry within,—Help! help!

Re-enter CASSIO, driving in RODERIGO.

Cas. You rogue! you rascal!

Mont. What's the matter, lieutenant?

Cas. A knave!—teach me my duty!
I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle. ⁵

Rod. Beat me!

Cas.

⁴ An infirmity *rooted, settled* in his constitution. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's explanation seems to fall short of the poet's meaning. The qualities of a tree are so changed by being engrafted, that its future fruits are not such as would have naturally sprung from the stock, but derive their qualities from the graft inserted into it. Conformably to this idea, is the assertion of Hamlet concerning the same vice in his countrymen:

“They clope us drunkards, &c. HENLEY.

Dr. Johnson's explanation is certainly just, though it has been controverted. So, in *King Lear*:—“then must we look to receive from his age not alone the *imperfection* of long *ingrafted* condition, but there-withal,” &c. MALONE.

⁵ A twiggen bottle is a *wicker'd* bottle; and so the quarto reads.

STEEVENS.

Cas. Dost thou prate, rogue?

[Striking RODERIGO.

Mon. Nay, good lieutenant;
[Staying him.

I pray you, fir, hold your hand.

Cas. Let me go, fir,
Or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard

Mon. Come, come, you're drunk.

Cas. Drunk! [They fight.

Iago. Away, I say! go out, and cry—a mutiny.

[Aside to ROD. who goes out.

Nay, good lieutenant,—alas, gentlemen,—

Help, ho!—Lieutenant,—fir,—Montano,—fir;—

Help, masters!—Here's a goodly watch, indeed!

[Bell rings.

Who's that that rings the bell?—Diablo, ho!

The town will rise: God's will, lieutenant! hold;

You will be sham'd for ever.

Enter OTHELLO, and Attendants.

Oth. What is the matter here?

Men. I bleed still, I am hurt to the death;—he dies.⁶

Oth. Hold, for your lives.

Iago. Hold, hold, lieutenant,—fir, Montano,—gentle-
men,—

Have you forgot all sense of place and duty?⁷

Hold, hold! the general speaks to you; hold, for shame!

Oth.

⁶ The first quarto reads—'Zounds, I bleed, &c. STEEVENS.

The editor of the folio, thinking it necessary to omit the first word in the line, absurdly supplied its place by adding at the end of the line, *He dies.*

I had formerly inadvertently said, that the marginal direction, *He faints*, was found in the quarto, 1622: but this was a mistake. It was inserted in a quarto of no value or authority, printed in 1630. MALONE.

Montano thinks he is mortally wounded, yet by these words he seems determined to continue the duel, and to kill his antagonist *Cassio*. So, when *Roderigo* runs at *Cassio*, in the fifth act, he says,—“Villain, thou diest.” TOLLET.

⁷ So Sir Thomas Hanmer. The rest:

—all place of sense and duty? JOHNSON.

Oth. Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?
 Are we turn'd Turks; and to ourselves do that,
 Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?
 For christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl:
 He that stirs next to carve for his own rage,
 Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.—
 Silence that dreadful bell,⁸ it frights the isle
 From her propriety.⁹—What is the matter, masters?—
 Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,
 Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee.

Iago. I do not know;—friends all but now, even now,
 In quarter,² and in terms like bride and groom

Devesting

⁸ It was a common practice formerly, when any great affray happened in a town, to ring the alarm bell. When David Rizzio was murdered at Edinburgh, the Provost ordered the *common bell* to be rung, and five hundred persons were immediately assembled. MALONE.

At Paris the *Tocfin* is still rung, as often as fires or disturbances break out. STEEVENS.

⁹ From her regular and *proper state*. JOHNSON.

² In their quarters; at their lodging. JOHNSON.

Rather at *peace, quiet*. They had been on that very spot (the court or platform, it is presumed before the castle) ever since Othello left them, which can scarcely be called being *in their quarters*, or *at their lodging*.

RITSON.

It required one example, if no more, to evince that *in quarter* ever signified *quiet, at peace*. But a little attention would have shown, that the *them*, whom he speaks of Othello's having left, was *only Cassio*; who, being joined by Iago, where Othello (but not on the *platform*) had just left him, is dissuaded from setting the watch immediately; entreated to partake of a stoop of wine, in company with a brace of Cyprus galants, then waiting without; and prevailed upon, though reluctantly, to invite them in. In this apartment the carousal happens, and wine is repeatedly called for, till at last Cassio, finding its too powerful effects, goes out to set the watch. At the proposal of Montano, himself and Iago follow Cassio towards the platform, and the latter sets on Roderigo to insult him. The scuffle ensues; an alarm is given, and Othello comes forth to inquire the cause. When, therefore, Iago answers:

~~Iago~~ I do not know:—friends all but now, even now

In quarter—

it is evident the *quarter* referred to, was *that apartment in the castle assigned to the officers on guard*, where Othello, after giving Cassio his orders, had, a little before, left him; and where Iago, with his companions, immediately found him. HENLEY.

In

Devesting them for bed : and then, but now,
 (As if some planet had unwitting men,)
 Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,
 In opposition bloody. I cannot speak
 Any beginning to this peevish odds;
 And 'would in action glorious I had lost
 These legs, that brought me to a part of it !

Oth. How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot ?³

Cas. I pray you, pardon me, I cannot speak.

Oth. Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;
 The gravity and stillness of your youth
 The world hath noted, and your name is great
 In mouths of wisest censure ; What's the matter,
 That you unlace⁴ your reputation thus,
 And spend your rich opinion,⁵ for the name
 Of a night-brawler ? give me answer to it.

Mon. Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger ;
 Your officer, Iago, can inform you—
 While I spare speech, which something now offends me,—
 Of all that I do know : nor know I aught,
 By me that's said or done amiss this night ;
 Unless self-charity⁶ be sometimes a vice ;

And

In quarter,] i. e. on our station.

Their *station* or *quarter* in the present instance, was the guard-room in Othello's castle. In *Cymbeline* we have—"their *quarter'd* fires," i. e. their fires *regularly disposed*.

In quarter Dr. Johnson supposed to mean, *at their lodgings* ; but that cannot be the meaning, for Montano and the gentlemen who accompanied him, had continued, from the time of their entrance, in the apartment in Othello's castle, in which the carousal had been ; and Cassio had only gone forth for a short time to the platform, to set the watch. On his return from the platform into the apartment, in which he left Montano and Iago, he meets Roderigo ; and the scuffle, first between Cassio and Roderigo, and then between Montano and Cassio, ensues. MALONE.

³ i. e. you have thus forgot yourself. STEEVENS.

⁴ Slacken, or *loosen*. Put in danger of dropping ; or perhaps stript of its ornaments. JOHNSON.

⁵ Throw away and squander a reputation so valuable as yours.

JOHNSON.

⁶ Care of one's self. JOHNSON.

And to defend ourselves it be a sin,
When violence affails us.

Oth. Now, by heaven,
My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
And passion, having my best judgement collied,⁷
Assays to lead the way: If I once stir,
Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
How this foul rout began, who set it on;
And he that is approv'd in this offence,⁸
Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,
Shall lose me.—What! in a town of war,
Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
To manage private and domestick quarrel,
In night, and on the court and guard of safety!⁹

'Tis

⁷ Thus the folio reads, and I believe rightly. Othello means, that passion has discoloured his judgement.

To *colly* anciently signified to *besmut*, to *blacken as with coal*. The word (as I am assured) is still used in the midland counties.

Mr. Tollet informs me that *Wallis's History of Northumberland*, p. 46, says, “—in our northern counties it [i. e. a fine black clay or ochre] is commonly known by the name of *collew* or *killozw*, by which name it is known by Dr. Woodward,” &c. The doctor says it had its name from *kollozw*, by which name, in the North, the *smut* or *grime on the top of chimneys* is called. *Colly*, however, is from *coal*, as *collier*. Sir Thomas Hanmer reads—*choler'd*. STEEVENS.

⁸ He that is convicted by proof, having been engaged in this offence.

JOHNSON.

⁹ Thus the old copies. Mr. Malone reads:

In night, and on the court of guard and safety STEEVENS.

These words have undoubtedly been transposed by negligence at the press. For this emendation, of which I am confident every reader will approve, I am answerable. The *court of guard* was the common phrase of the time for the *guard-room*. It has already been used by Iago in a former scene; and what still more strongly confirms the emendation, Iago, is there speaking of *Cassio*, and describing him as about to be placed in the very station where he now appears. “The *lieutenant* to night watches on the *court of guard*.”

I may venture to assert with confidence, that no editor of Shakspeare has more sedulously adhered to the ancient copies than I have done, or more steadily opposed any change grounded merely on obsolete or unusual phraseology. But the error in the present case is so apparent, and the phrase, *the court of guard*, so established by the uniform usage of the

'Tis monstrous.—Iago, who began it?

Mon. If partially affin'd,² or leagu'd in office,
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
Thou art no soldier.

Iago. Touch me not so near:
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth,
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth
Shall nothing wrong him.—Thus it is, general.
Montano and myself being in speech,
There comes a fellow, crying out for help;
And Cassio following him with determin'd sword,
To execute upon him: Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause;
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
Lest, by his clamour (as it so fell out,)
The town might fall in fright: he, swift of foot,
Out-ran my purpose; and I return'd the rather
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
And Cassio high in oath; which, till to-night,
I ne'er might say before: When I came back,
(For this was brief,) I found them close together,
At blow, and thrust; even as again they were,
When you yourself did part them.
More of this matter can I not report:—
But men are men; the best sometimes forget:—
Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,—
As men in rage strike those that wish them best,—

Yet

the poets of Shakspeare's time, that not to have corrected the mistake of the compositor in the present instance, would in my apprehension have been unwarrantable. If the phraseology of the old copies had merely been unusual, I should not have ventured to make the slightest change: but the frequent occurrence of the phrase, *the court of guard*, in all our old plays, and that being *the word of art*, leave us no room to entertain a doubt of its being the true reading.

I may add, that *the court of safety* may in a metaphorical sense be understood; but who ever talked of *the guard* [i. e. the *safety*] of *safety*?

MALONE.

² *Affin'd* is bound by proximity of relationship; but here it means related by nearness of office. STEEVENS.

Yet, surely, Cassio, I believe, receiv'd,
From him that fled, some strange indignity,
Which patience could not pass.

Oth. I know, Iago,
Thy honesty—and love doth mince this matter,
Making it light to Cassio:—Cassio, I love thee;
But never more be officer of mine.—

Enter DESDEMONA, attended.

Look if my gentle love be not rais'd up;—
I'll make thee an example.

Des. What's the matter, dear?

Oth. All's well now, sweeting;⁹ Come away to bed.
Sir, for your hurts,
Myself will be your surgeon: Lead him off.
[*To MONTANO, who is led off.*

Iago, look with care about the town;
And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.—
Come, Desdemona; 'tis the soldiers' life,
To have their balmy slumbers wak'd with strife.

[*Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO.*

Iago. What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

Cas. Ay, past all surgery.

Iago. Marry, heaven forbid!

Cas. Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost
my reputation! I have lost the immortal part, sir, of my-
self, and what remains is bestial.—My reputation, Iago,
my reputation.

Iago. As I am an honest man, I thought you had received
some bodily wound; there is more offence in that, than in
reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition;
oft got without merit, and lost without deserving: You
have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself
such a loser. What, man! there are ways to recover the
general again: You are but now cast in this mood,²
a punishment more in policy than in malice; even so

as

⁹ This surfeiting vulgar term of fondness originates from the name
of an apple distinguished only by its insipid sweetness. STEEVENS.

² Ejected in his anger. JOHNSON.

as one would beat his offenceless dog, to affright an imperious lion: sue to him again, and he's yours.

Cas. I will rather sue to be despised, than to deceive so good a commander, with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot?³ and squabble? swagger? swear? and discourse fustian with one's own shadow?—O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call the—devil!

Iago. What was he that you follow'd with your sword? What had he done to you?

Cas. I know not.

Iago. Is it possible?

Cas. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore.—O, that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, revel, pleasure, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!

Iago. Why, but you are now well enough; How came you thus recover'd?

Cas. It hath pleased the devil, drunkenness, to give place to the devil, wrath: one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

Iago. Come, you are too severe a moraler: As the time, the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen; but, since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.

Cas. I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me, I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O strange!—Every inordinate cup is unblest'd, and the ingredient is a devil.

Iago. Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used; exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think, you think I love you.

Cas. I have well approved it, sir.—I drunk!

Iago. You, or any man living, may be drunk at some time,

³ A phrase signifying to act foolishly and childishly. WARBURTON.

By “*speak parrot*,” surely the poet meant, *talk idly*,” and not, as Dr. Warburton supposes, “*act foolishly*.” MALONE.

time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general;—I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement⁴ of her parts and graces:—confess yourself freely to her; importune her; she'll help to put you in your place again: she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, that she holds it a vice in her goodness, not to do more than she is requested: This broken joint, between you and her husband, entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes against any lay⁵ worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before.

Cas. You advise me well.

Iago. I protest, in the sincerity of love, and honest kindness.

Cas. I think it freely; and, betimes in the morning, will I beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me: I am desperate of my fortunes, if they check me here.

Iago. You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.

Cas. Good night, honest Iago. [Exit CASSIO.]

Iago. And what's he then, that says,—I play the villain? When this advice is free,⁶ I give, and honest, Probal to thinking, and (indeed) the course To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy The inclining⁷ Desdemona to subdue

In

⁴ Old copies—devotement.] I remember, it is said of Antony, in the beginning of his tragedy, that he who used to fix his eyes altogether on the dreadful ranges of war:

“ — now bends, now turns,

“ The office and devotion of their view

“ Upon a tawny front.”

This is finely expressed; but I cannot persuade myself that our poet would ever have said, any one devoted himself to the devotement of any thing. All the copies agree; but the mistake certainly arose from a single letter being turned upside down at press. THEOBALD.

The same mistake has happened in *Hamlet*, and in several other places. MALONE.

⁵ i. e. any bet, any wager. RITSON.

⁶ This counsel has an appearance of honest openness, of frank goodwill. JOHNSON.

Rather gratis, not paid for, as his advice to Roderigo was. HENLEY.

⁷ Inclining here signifies compliant. MALONE.

In any honest suit; she's fram'd as fruitful⁸
 As the free elements.⁹ And then for her
 To win the Moor,—were't to renounce his baptism,
 All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,—
 His soul is so enfetters'd to her love,
 That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
 Even as her appetite shall play the god
 With his weak function. How am I then a villain,
 To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,²
 Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
 When devils will their blackest sins put on,
 They do suggest³ at first with heavenly shows,
 As I do now: For, while this honest fool
 Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
 And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
 I'll pour this pestilence⁴ into his ear,—
 That she repeals him⁵ for her body's lust;
 And, by how much she strives to do him good,
 She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
 So will I turn her virtue into pitch;
 And out of her own goodness make the net,
 That shall enmesh them all.⁶—How now, Roderigo?

Enter RODERIGO.

Rod. I do follow here in the chace, not like a hound that
 hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost
 spent; I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgell'd;
 and,

⁸ Corresponding to *benignus*, ἀφθονός. HENLEY.

⁹ Liberal, bountiful, as the elements, out of which all things are produced. JOHNSON.

² Parallel, for even; because parallel lines run even and equidistant.

WARBURTON.

Parallel course; i. e. course level, and even with his design. JOHNSON.

³ When devils mean to *instigate* men to commit the most atrocious crimes.

To *put on*, has already occurred twice in the present play, in this sense. To *suggest* in old language is to *tempt*. MALONE.

⁴ Pestilence, for poison. WARBURTON.

⁵ That is, recalls him. JOHNSON.

⁶ A metaphor from taking birds in meshes. POPE.

Why not from the taking fish, or which purpose nets are more frequently used? M. MASON.

and, I think, the issue will be—I shall have so much experience for my pains : and so, with no money at all, and a little more wit, return to Venice.

Iago. How poor are they, that have not patience !—
What wound did ever heal, but by degrees ?
Thou know'st, we work by wit, and not by witchcraft ;
And wit depends on dilatory time.
Does't not go well ? Cassio hath beaten thee,
And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashier'd Cassio :
Though other things grow fair against the sun,
Yet fruits, that blossom first, will first be ripe :⁷
Content thyself a while.—By the mass, 'tis morning ;⁸
Pleasure, and action, make the hours seem short.—
Retire thee ; go where thou art billeted :
Away, I say ; thou shalt know more hereafter :
Nay, get thee gone. [*Exit Rod.*] Two things are to be
done,—

My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress ;
I'll set her on ;
Myself, the while, to draw ⁹ the Moor apart,

And

⁷ Of many different things, all planned with the same art, and promoted with the same diligence, some must succeed sooner than others, by the order of nature. Every thing cannot be done at once ; we must proceed by the necessary gradation. We are not to *despair* of slow events any more than of tardy fruits, while the causes are in regular progress, and the fruits *grow fair against the sun*. Sir Thomas Hanmer has not, I think, rightly conceived the sentiment ; for he reads :

Those fruits which blossom first, *are not first* ripe.

I have therefore drawn it out at length, for there are few to whom that will be easy which was difficult to Sir Thomas Hanmer. JOHNSON.

The *blossoming*, or fair appearance of things, to which Iago alludes, is, the removal of Cassio. As their plan had already *blossomed*, so there was good ground for expecting that it would *soon* be ripe. Iago does not, I think, mean to compare *their* scheme to *tardy* fruits, as Dr. Johnson seems to have supposed. MALONE.

⁸ Here we have one of the numerous arbitrary alterations made by the Master of the Revels in the playhouse copies, from which a great part of the folio was printed. It reads—*In troth*, 'tis morning. See *The Historical Account of the English Stage*. MALONE.

⁹ Thus the old copies ; and this reading is consistent with the tenor of the present interrupted speech. Iago is still debating with himself concerning the means to perplex Othello. STEEVENS.

And bring him jump when³ he may Cassio find
Soliciting his wife:—Ay, that's the way;
Dull not device by coldness and delay.

[*Exit.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Before the Castle.

Enter CASSIO, and some Musicians.

Cas. Masters, play here, I will content your pains,
Something that's brief; and bid—good-morrow, general.³
[*Musick.*]

Enter Clown.

Clo. Why, masters, have your instruments been at Naples,
that they speak i'the nose thus?⁴

1. *Mus.* How, fir, how!

Clo. Are these, I pray you, call'd wind instruments?

1. *Mus.* Ay, marry, are they, fir.

Clo. O, thereby hangs a tail.

1. *Mus.* Whereby hangs a tale, fir?

Clo. Marry, fir, by many a wind instrument that I know.
But, masters, here's money for you: and the general so likes
your musick, that he desires you, of all loves, to make no
more noise with it.

1. *Mus.* Well, fir, we will not.

Clo. If you have any musick that may not be heard, to't
again:

² *Unexpectedly*:—an expression taken from the bound, or start, with
which we are shocked, at the sudden and unlooked-for appearance of any
effensive object. HENLEY.

Jump when, I believe, signifies no more than *just at the time when*.

STEEVENS.

³ It is the usual practice of the *wizits*, or nocturnal minstrels, in
several towns in the North of England, after playing a tune or two, to
cry “Good-morrow, maister such a one, good-morrow dame,” adding
the hour, and state of the weather. It should seem to have prevailed at
Stratford-upon-Avon. They formerly used *hautboys*, which are the
wind-instruments here meant. RITSON.

⁴ The venereal disease first appeared at the siege of Naples. JOHNSON.

again: but, as they say, to hear musick, the general does not greatly care.

Mus. We have none such, sir.

Clo. Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away:
Go; vanish into air; away. [*Exeunt Musicians.*]

Cas. Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

Clo. No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, keep up thy quilllets. There's a poor piece of gold for thee: if the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife, be stirring, tell her, there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech: Wilt thou do this?

Clo. She is stirring, sir; if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her. [*Exit.*]

Enter IAGO.

Cas. Do, good my friend.—In happy time, Iago.

Iago. You have not been a-bed then?

Cas. Why, no; the day had broke
Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago,
To send in to your wife: My suit to her
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona
Procure me some access.

Iago. I'll send her to you presently;
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor
Out of the way, that your converse and business
May be more free. [*Exit.*]

Cas. I humbly thank you for't. I never knew
A Florentine more kind and honest.⁵

Enter

⁵ In consequence of this line, a doubt has been entertained concerning the country of Iago. Cassio was undoubtedly a Florentine, as appears by the first scene of the play, where he is expressly called one. That Iago was a *Venetian*, is proved by a speech in the third scene of this act, and by what he says in the fifth act, after having stabbed Roderigo:

“*Iago.* Alas, my dear friend and countryman, Roderigo!

“*Gra.* What, of *Venice*?

“*Iago.* Yes.”

All that Cassio means to say in the passage before us is, I never experienced more honesty and kindness even in one of my own countrymen, than in this man. MALONE.

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. Good morrow, good lieutenant: I am sorry
For your displeasure;⁶ but all will soon be well.
The general, and his wife, are talking of it;
And she speaks for you stoutly: The Moor replies,
That he, you hurt, is of great fame in Cyprus,
And great affinity; and that, in wholesome wisdom,
He might not but refuse you: but, he protests, he loves
you;
And needs no other suitor, but his likings,
To take the saf'st occasion by the front,
To bring you in again.

Cas. Yet, I beseech you,—
If you think fit, or that it may be done,—
Give me advantage of some brief discourse
With Desdemona alone.

Emil. Pray you, come in;
I will bestow you where you shall have time
To speak your bosom freely.

Cas. I am much bound to you.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Room in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Gentlemen.

Oth. These letters give, Iago, to the pilot;
And, by him, do my duties to the state:
That done, I will be walking on the works,
Repair there to me.

Iago. Well, my good lord, I'll do't.

Oth. This fortification, gentlemen,—shall we see't?

Gent. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*]

⁶ i. e. the displeasure you have incurred from Othello. STEEVENS.

SCENE

S C E N E III.

*Before the Castle.**Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA.*

Des. Be thou assur'd, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

Emil. Good madam, do; I know it grieves my husband,
As if the case were his.

Des. O, that's an honest fellow.—Do not doubt, Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

Cas. Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He's never any thing but your true servant.

Des. O, fir, I thank you: You do love my lord;
You have known him long; and be you well assur'd,
He shall in strangeness stand no further off
Than in a politick distance.

Cas. Ay, but lady,
That policy may either last so long,⁶
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
That, I being absent, and my place supplied,
My general will forget my love and service.

Des. Do not doubt that; before Emilia here,
I give thee warrant of thy place: assure thee,
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
To the last article: my lord shall never rest;
I'll watch him tame,⁷ and talk him out of patience;
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
I'll intermingle every thing he does

With

⁶ He may either of himself think it politick to keep me out of office so long, or he may be satisfied with such slight reasons, or so many accidents may make him think my re-admission at that time improper, that I may be quite forgotten. JOHNSON.

⁷ It is said, that the ferocity of beasts, insuperable and irreclaimable by any other means, is subdued by keeping them from sleep. JOHNSON.

Hawks and other birds are tamed by keeping them from sleep, and it is to the management of these that Shakspeare alludes. STEEVENS.

With Cassio's suit : Therefore be merry, Cassio ;
For thy solicitor shall rather die,
Than give thy cause away.

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO, at a distance.

Emil. Madam, here comes
My lord.

Cas. Madam, I'll take my leave.

Des. Why, stay,
And hear me speak.

Cas. Madam, not now ; I am very ill at ease,
Unfit for mine own purposes.

Des. Well, well,
Do your discretion. [Exit CASSIO.]

Iago. Ha ! I like not that.

Oth. What dost thou say ?

Iago. Nothing, my lord : or if — I know not what. |

Oth. Was not that Cassio, parted from my wife ?

Iago. Cassio, my lord ? No, sure, I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming.

Oth. I do believe, 'twas he.

Des. How now, my lord ?
I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

Oth. Who is't, you mean ?

Des. Why, your lieutenant Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace, or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take ;⁸
For, if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance, and not in cunning,⁹
I have no judgement in an honest face :

I pr'ythee,

⁸ Cassio was to be reconciled to his general, not his general to him, therefore *take* cannot be right. We should read — *make*. WARBURTON.

To *take his reconciliation*, may be to accept the submission which he makes in order to be reconciled. JOHNSON.

⁹ *Cunning*, for design, or purpose, simply. WARBURTON.

Perhaps rather for *knowledge*, the ancient sense of the word. The opposition which seems to have been intended between cunning and ignorance, favours this interpretation. MALONE.

I pr'ythee, call him back.

Oth. Went he hence now?

Des. Ay, sooth; so humbled.

That he hath left part of his grief with me;

I suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

Oth. Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.

Des. But shall't be shortly?

Oth. The sooner, sweet, for you.

Des. Shall't be to-night at supper?

Oth. No, not to-night.

Des. To-morrow dinner then?

Oth. I shall not dine at home;

I meet the captains at the citadel.

Des. Why then, to-morrow night; or tuesday morn;

Or tuesday noon, or night; or wednesday morn;—

I pray thee, name the time; but let it not

Exceed three days: in faith, he's penitent;

And yet his trespass, in our common reason,

(Save that, they say, the wars must make examples

Out of their best,²) is not almost a fault

To incur a private check: When shall he come?

Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul,

What you could ask me, that I should deny,

Or stand so mammering on.³ What! Michael Cassio,

That came a wooing with you;⁴ and many a time,

When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,

Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to do

To bring him in! Trust me, I could do much,—

Oth. Pr'ythee, no more: let him come when he will;
I will deny thee nothing.

Des. Why, this is not a boon;

'Tis

² The severity of military discipline must not spare the *best men* of the army, when their punishment may afford a wholesome *example*.

JOHNSON.

³ To hesitate, to stand in suspense. The word often occurs in old English writings, and probably takes its original from the French *M'Amour*, which men were apt often to repeat when they were not prepared to give a direct answer. HANMER.

⁴ And yet in the first act Cassio appears perfectly ignorant of the amour, and is indebted to Iago for the information of Othello's marriage, and of the person to whom he is married. STEEVENS.

"Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm;
Or sue to you to do peculiar profit
To your own person: Nay, when I have a suit,
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,
It shall be full of poize⁵ and difficulty,
And fearful to be granted.

Oth. I will deny thee nothing:
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,
To leave me but a little to myself.

Des. Shall I deny you? no: Farewell, my lord.

Oth. Farewell, my Desdemona: I will come to thee
straight.

Des. Emilia, come:—Be it as your fancies teach you;
Whate'er you be, I am obedient. [*Exit, with EMILIA.*]

Oth. Excellent wretch!⁶ Perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.⁷

Iago. My noble lord,—

Oth. What dost thou say, Iago?

Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,
Know of your love?

Oth. He did, from first to last: Why dost thou ask?

Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.

Oth. Why of thy thought, Iago?

Iago.

⁵ i. e. of weight. STEEVENS.

⁶ The meaning of the word *wretch*, is not generally understood. It is now, in some parts of England, a term of the softest and fondest tenderness. It expresses the utmost degree of amiableness, joined with an idea, which perhaps all tenderness includes, of feebleness, softness, and want of protection. Othello, considering Desdemona as excelling in beauty and virtue, soft and timorous by her sex, and by her situation absolutely in his power, calls her, *Excellent wretch*! It may be expressed:

Dear, harmless, helpless excellence. JOHNSON.

⁷ When my love is for a moment suspended by suspicion, I have nothing in my mind but discord, tumult, perturbation, and confusion.

JOHNSON.

There is another meaning possible. *When I cease to love thee, the world is at an end*; i. e. there remains nothing valuable or important. The first explanation may be more elegant, the second is perhaps more easy.

STEEVENS.

Iago. I did not think, he had been acquainted with her.

Oth. O, yes; and went between us very oft.

Iago. Indeed?

Oth. Indeed! ay, indeed:—Discern'st thou aught in that?

Is he not honest?

Iago. Honest, my lord?

Oth. Ay, honest.

Iago. My lord, for aught I know.

Oth. What dost thou think?

Iago. Think, my lord?

Oth. Think, my lord!

By heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown.—Thou dost mean something:
I heard thee say but now,—Thou lik'dst not that,
When Cassio left my wife; What did'st not like?
And, when I told thee—he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou cry'dst, *Indeed?*
And did'st contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then had'st shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit: If thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.

Iago. My lord, you know I love you.

Oth. I think, thou dost;

And,—for I know thou art full of love and honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them breath,—
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:
For such things, in a false disloyal knave,
Are tricks of custom; but, in a man that's just,
They are close denotements,⁸ working from the heart,
That passion cannot rule.

Iago.

⁸ Thus the earliest quarto. But let Dr. Warburton be heard in defence of, “*cold dilations*,” the reading of the second folio. I should willingly, however, have adopted an emendation proposed by Dr. Johnson in the subsequent note, could I have discovered that the word—*dilation* was ever used in its Roman sense of—*accusation*, during the time of Shakspeare. Bacon frequently employs it, but always to signify *carriage* or *conveyance*. STEEVENS.

These

Iago. For Michael Cassio,—
I dare be sworn, I think that he is honest.

Oth. I think so too.

Iago. Men should be what they seem;
Or, those that be not, 'would they might seem none!⁹

Oth. Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago. Why then
I think that Cassio is an honest man.

Oth. Nay, yet there's more in this:
I pray thee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate; and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.

Iago. Good my lord, pardon me;
Though I am bound to every act of duty,
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.²
Utter my thoughts? Why, say, they are vile and false,—
As where's that palace, whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? who has a breast so pure,
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets, and law-days,³ and in session sit
With meditations lawful?

Oth.

These stops and breaks are *cold dilations*, or cold keeping back a secret, which men of phlegmatick constitutions, whose hearts are not swayed or governed by their passions, we find, can do: while more sanguine tempers reveal themselves at once, and without reserve. **WARBURTON.**

The old copies give,—*dilations*, except that the earlier quarto has—*denotements*; which was the author's first expression, afterwards changed by him, not to *dilations*, but to *delations*; to *occult* and *secret accusations*, *working* involuntarily *from the heart*, which, though resolved to conceal the fault, cannot rule its *passion* of resentment. **JOHNSON.**

⁹ I believe the meaning is, 'would they might no longer seem, or bear the shape of men. **JOHNSON.**

May not the meaning be, 'Would they might not seem honest!

MALONE.

² I am not bound to do that, *which* even slaves are not bound to do.

MALONE.

³ *Leets*, and *law-days*, are synonymous terms: "Leet (says Jacob, in his *Law Dictionary*) is otherwise called a *law-day*." They are there explained to be courts, or meetings of the *hundred*, "to certify the king of the good manners, and government, of the inhabitants," and to enquire of all offences that are not capital. The poet's meaning will now be plain. *Who has a breast so little apt to form ill opinions of others, but*
that

Oth. Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,
If thou but think'st him wrong'd, and mak'st his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.

Iago. I do beseech you,—
Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guesses,⁴
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses; and, oft, my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not,—I entreat you then,
From one that so imperfectly conjects,
You'd take no notice; nor build yourself a trouble
Out of his scattering and unsure observance:—
It were not for your quiet, nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,
'To let you know my thoughts.

Oth. What dost thou mean?

Iago. Good name,⁵ in man, and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he, that filches from me my good name,

Robs

that foul suspicions will sometimes mix with his fairest and most candid thoughts, and erect a court in his mind, to enquire of the offences apprehended.

STEEVENS.

Who has so virtuous a breast, that some uncharitable surmises and impure conceptions will not sometimes enter into it; hold a session there as in a regular court, and “bench by the side” of authorised and lawful thoughts?

The leet, according to Lambard, was a court of jurisdiction above the wapentake or hundred, comprehending three or four hundreds. The jurisdiction of this court is now in most places merged in that of the County Court. MALONE.

⁴ Not to mention that, in this reading, the sentence is abrupt and broken, it is likewise highly absurd. I beseech you give yourself no uneasiness from my unsure observance, *though* I am vicious in my guesses. For his being an ill guesser was a reason why Othello should not be uneasy: in propriety, therefore, it should either have been, *though I am not vicious*, or *because I am vicious*. It appears then we should read:

I do beseech you,

Think, I, perchance, am vicious in my guesses.

Which makes the sense pertinent and perfect. WARBURTON.

⁵ The sacred writings were here perhaps in our poet's thoughts: “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour than silver and gold.” *Proverbs*, ch. xxii. v. i. MALONE.

Robs me of that, which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

Oth. By heaven, I'll know thy thought.

Iago. You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

Oth. Ha!

Iago. O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
It is the green-ey'd monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on:⁶ That cuckold lives in bliss,
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er,
Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves!

Oth. O misery!

Iago. Poor, and content, is rich, and rich enough;
But riches, fineless,⁷ is as poor as winter,⁸
To him that ever fears he shall be poor:—
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend

From

⁶ i. e. loaths that which nourishes and sustains it. This being a miserable state, Iago bids him beware of it. The Oxford editor reads:

—— which doth make

The meat it feeds on:

Implying that its suspicions are unreal and groundless, which is the very contrary to what he would here make his general think, as appears from what follows:

—— That cuckold lives in bliss, &c.

In a word, the villain is for fixing him jealous: and therefore bids him beware of jealousy, not that it was an unreasonable, but a miserable state; and this plunges him into it, as we see by his reply, which is only,

“O misery!” WARBURTON.

I have received Hanmer's emendation; because *to mock*, does not signify *to loath*; and because, when Iago bids Othello *beware of jealousy, the green-ey'd monster*, it is natural to tell why he should beware, and for caution he gives him two reasons, that jealousy *often* creates its own cause, and that, when the causes are real, jealousy is misery.

JOHNSON.

In this place, and some others, *to mock* seems the same with *to mam-mock*. FARMER.

I have not the smallest doubt that Shakspeare wrote *make*, and have therefore inserted it in my text. The words *make* and *mocke* (for such was the old spelling) are often confounded in these plays. MALONE.

⁷ Unbounded, endless, unnumbered treasures. JOHNSON.

⁸ Finely expressed: *winter* producing no fruits. WARBURTON.

From jealousy !

Oth. Why ? why is this ?
 Think'st thou, I'd make a life of jealousy,
 To follow still the changes of the moon
 With fresh suspicions ? No : to be once in doubt,
 Is—once to be resolv'd : Exchange me for a goat,
 When I shall turn the business of my soul
 To such exsufflicate⁹ and blown surmises,
 Matching thy inference.² 'Tis not to make me jealous,
 To say—my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
 Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well ;
 Where virtue is, these are more virtuous :³
 Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
 The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt ;
 For she had eyes, and chose me : No, Iago ;
 I'll see, before I doubt ; when I doubt, prove ;
 And, on the proof, there is no more but this,—
 Away at once with love, or jealousy.

Iago. I am glad of this ; for now I shall have reason
 To show the love and duty that I bear you
 With franker spirit : therefore, as I am bound,
 Receive it from me :—I speak not yet of proof.
 Look to your wife ; observe her well with Cassio ;
 Wear your eye—thus, not jealous, nor secure :
 I would not have your free and noble nature,
 Out of self-bounty,⁴ be abus'd ; look to't :
 I know our country disposition well ;

In

⁹ [Sir Thomas Hanmer—*exsuffolate*.] This odd and far-fetched word was made yet more uncouth in all the editions before Sir Thomas Hanmer's, by being printed—*exsuffligate*. The allusion is to a bubble. Do not think, says the Moor, that I shall change the noble designs that now employ my thoughts, to suspicions which, like bubbles *blown* into a wide extent, have only an empty show without solidity ; or that, in consequence of such empty fears, I will close with thy inference against the virtue of my wife. JOHNSON.

² That is,—such as you have mentioned in describing the torments of jealousy. M. MASON.

³ An action in itself indifferent, grows *virtuous* by its end and application. JOHNSON.

⁴ *Self-bounty* for inherent generosity. WARBURTON.

In Venice⁵ they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience
Is—not to leave undone, but keep unknown.

Oth. Dost thou say so?

Iago. She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And, when she seem'd⁶ to shake, and fear your looks,
She lov'd them most.

Oth. And so she did.

Iago. Why, go to, then;
She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,
To seal her father's eyes up, close as oak,⁷—
He thought, 'twas witchcraft:—But I am much to blame;
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon,
For too much loving you.

Oth. I am bound to thee for ever.

Iago. I see, this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

Oth. Not a jot, not a jot.

Iago. Trust me, I fear it has.

I hope,

⁵ Here Iago seems to be a Venetian. JOHNSON.

There is nothing in any other part of the play, properly understood,
to imply otherwise. HENLEY.

Various other passages, as well as the present, prove him to have been
a Venetian, nor is there any ground for doubting the poet's intention on
this head. MALONE.

⁶ *And, when she seem'd —*] This and the following argument of Iago
ought to be deeply impressed on every reader. Deceit and falsehood,
whatever conveniences they may for a time promise or produce, are, in
the sum of life, obstacles to happiness. Those, who profit by the cheat,
distrust the deceiver, and the act, by which kindness is sought, puts an
end to confidence.

The same objection may be made with a lower degree of strength
against the imprudent generosity of disproportionate marriages. When
the first heat of passion is over, it is easily succeeded by suspicion, that
the same violence of inclination, which caused one irregularity, may
stimulate to another; and those who have shewn, that their passions are
too powerful for their prudence, will, with very slight appearances against
them, be censured, as not very likely to restrain them by their virtue.

JOHNSON.

⁷ The *oak* is (I believe) the most *close-grained* wood of general use in
England. *Close as oak*, means, *close as the grain of oak*. To *seal* is an
expression from falconry. STEEVENS.

To *seal* a hawk is to sew up his eye-lids. MALONE.

I hope, you will consider, what is spoke
Comes from my love;—But, I do see you are mov'd:—
I am to pray you, not to strain my speech
To grosser issues,⁸ nor to larger reach,
Than to suspicion.

Oth. I will not.

Iago. Should you do so, my lord,
My speech should fall into such vile success⁹
As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend:—
My lord, I see you are mov'd.

Oth. No, not much mov'd:—
I do not think, but Desdemona's honest.

Iago. Long live she so! and long live you to think so!

Oth. And yet, how nature erring from itself,—

Iago. Ay, there's the point:—As,—to be bold with
you,—

Not to affect many proposed matches,
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree;
Whereto, we see, in all things nature tends:
Foh! one may smell, in such, a will² most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.—
But pardon me; I do not, in position,
Distinctly speak of her: though I may fear,
Her will, recoiling to her better judgement,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And (hapily) repent.

Oth.

⁸ *Issues*, for conclusions. WARBURTON.

⁹ *Success*, for succession, i. e. conclusion; not prosperous issue.

WARBURTON.

I rather think there is a depravation, and would read:

My speech will fall into such vile excess.

If *success* be the right word, it seems to mean *consequence or event*, as *successo* is used in Italian. JOHNSON.

I think *success* may, in this instance, bear its common interpretation. What Iago means seems to be this: “Should you do so, my lord, my words would be attended by such an infamous degree of success, as my thoughts do not even aim at.” Iago, who counterfeits the feelings of virtue, might have said *fall into success*, and *vile success*, because he would appear to Othello, to wish that the enquiry into Desdemona's guilt might prove fruitless and unsuccessful. STEEVENS.

² *Will*, is for wilfulness. It is so used by Ascham. *A rank will*, is *self-will* overgrown and exuberant. JOHNSON.

Oth. Farewell, farewell :
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more ;
Set on thy wife to observe : Leave me, Iago.

Iago. My lord, I take my leave.

[*Going.*

Oth. Why did I marry ?—This honest creature, doubt-
less,

Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

Iago. My lord, I would, I might entreat your honour
To scan this thing no further ; leave it to time :
And though it be fit that Cassio have his place,
(For, sure, he fills it up with great ability,)
Yet, if you please to hold him off a while,
You shall by that perceive him and his means :³
Note, if your lady strain his entertainment⁴
With any strong or vehement importunity ;
Much will be seen in that. In the mean time,
Let me be thought too busy in my fears,
(As worthy cause I have, to fear—I am,)
And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.

Oth. Fear not my government.⁵

Iago. I once more take my leave.

[*Exit.*

Oth. This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned⁶ spirit,
Of human dealings : If I do prove her haggard,⁷
Though that her jesses⁸ were my dear heart-strings,
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,

To

³ You shall discover whether he thinks his best *means*, his most powerful *interest*, is by the solicitation of your lady. JOHNSON.

⁴ Press hard his re-admission to his pay and office. *Entertainment* was the military term for admission of soldiers. JOHNSON.

⁵ Do not distrust my ability to contain my passion. JOHNSON.

⁶ *Learned*, for experienced. WARBURTON.

The construction is, He knows with a learned spirit all qualities of human dealings. JOHNSON.

⁷ A *baggard* hawk, is a wild hawk, a hawk unreclaimed, or irreclaimable. JOHNSON.

A *baggard* is a particular species of hawk. It is difficult to be reclaimed, but not irreclaimable. STEEVENS.

⁸ *Jesses* are short straps of leather tied about the foot of a hawk, by which the is held on the fist. HANMER.

To prey at fortune.⁹ Haply, for I am black ;
 And have not those soft parts ² of conversation
 That chamberers ³ have : Or, for I am declin'd
 Into the vale of years ;—yet that's not much ;—
 She's gone ; I am abus'd ; and my relief
 Must be—to loath her. O curse of marriage,
 That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
 And not their appetites ! I had rather be a toad,
 And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love,
 For others' uses. Yet, 'tis the plague of great ones ;
 Prerogativ'd are they less than the base :
 'Tis destiny unshunnable,⁴ like death ;
 Even then this forked ⁵ plague is fated to us,
 When we do quicken. Desdemona comes :

⁹ The falconers always let fly the hawk against the wind ; if she flies with the wind behind her, she seldom returns. If therefore a hawk was for any reason to be dismissed, she was *let down the wind*, and from that time shifted for herself, and *preyed at fortune*. This was told me by the late Mr. Clark. JOHNSON.

This passage may possibly receive illustration from a similar one in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 2, sect. i. mem. 3 : “ As a long-winged hawke, when he is first *whistled off the fist*, mounts aloft, and for his pleasure fetcheth many a circuit in the ayre, still soaring higher and higher, till he comes to his full pitch, and in the end, when the game is sprung, comes down amaine, and *stoupes* upon a sudden.” PERCY.

² *Parts* seems here to be synonymous with *arts*. REED.

³ i. e. men of intrigue. STEEVENS.

The sense of *chamberers* may be ascertained from *Rom.* xiii. 13, where *μὴ κοιταῖς* is rendered, in the common version, “ *not in chambering*.” HENLEY.

Chambering and *wantonness* are mentioned together in the sacred writings. MALONE.

⁴ To be consistent, Othello must mean, that it is destiny unshunnable by *great ones*, not by all mankind. MALONE.

⁵ In allusion to a *barbed* or *forked* arrow, which, once infixed, cannot be extracted. JOHNSON.

Or rather, the *forked plague* is the cuckold's horns. PERCY.

Dr. Johnson may be right. I meet with the same thought in *King Lear* :

“ ——— though the *fork* invade

“ The region of my heart.” STEEVENS.

Enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA.

If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!—
I'll not believe it.

Des. How now, my dear Othello?
Your dinner, and the generous islanders⁶
By you invited, do attend your presence.

Oth. I am to blame.

Des. Why is your speech so faint? are you not well?

Oth. I have a pain upon my forehead here.

Des. Faith, that's with watching; 'twill away again:
Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
It will be well.

Oth. Your napkin is too little;⁷

[*He puts the handkerchief from him, and it drops.*
Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

Des. I am very sorry that you are not well.

[*Exeunt OTH. and DES.*

Emil. I am glad, I have found this napkin;
This was her first remembrance from the Moor:
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woo'd me to steal it: but she so loves the token,
(For he conjur'd her, she should ever keep it,)
'That she reserves it evermore about her,
'To kiss, and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,⁸

And

⁶ The islanders of *rank, distinction*.

Generous has here the power of *generosus*, Lat. This explanation, however, may be too particular. STEEVENS.

⁷ Ray says, that a pocket handkerchief is so called about Sheffield in Yorkshire. So, in Greene's *Newer too late*, 1616: "I can wet one of my new lokeram *napkins* with weeping."

Napery signifies *linen in general*. So, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, 1635: "— prythee put me into wholesome *napery*." STEEVENS.

In the North of England, and in Scotland, this term for a handkerchief is still used. MALONE.

⁸ That is, copied. Her first thoughts are, to have a copy made of it for her husband, and restore the original to Desdemona. But the sudden coming in of Iago, in a surly humour, makes her alter her resolution, to please him. The same phrase afterwards occurs between Cassio and Bianca, in scene iv. BLACKSTONE.

And give it Iago :

What he'll do with it, heaven knows, not I ;

I nothing, but to please his fantasy.

Enter IAGO.

Iago. How now ! what do you here alone ?

Emil. Do not you chide ; I have a thing for you.

Iago. A thing for me ?—it is a common thing.

Emil. Ha !

Iago. To have a foolish wife.

Emil. O, is that all ? What will you give me now
For that same handkerchief ?

Iago. What handkerchief ?

Emil. What handkerchief ?

Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona ;

That which so often you did bid me steal.

Iago. Hast stolen it from her ?

Emil. No, faith ; she let it drop by negligence ;
And, to the advantage, I, being here, took't up.⁹
Look, here it is.

Iago. A good wench ; give it me.

Emil. What will you do with it, that you have been so
earnest
To have me filch it ?

Iago. Why, what's that to you ?

[*Snatching it.*]

Emil. If it be not for some purpose of import,
Give it me again : Poor lady ! she'll run mad,
When she shall lack it.

Iago. Be not you known of't ; I have use for it.

Go, leave me. [Exit EMILIA.
I will

This scheme of getting the work of this valued handkerchief copied,
and restoring the original to Desdemona, was, I suppose, introduced by
the poet, to render Emilia less unamiable.

It is remarkable, that when she perceives Othello's fury on the loss
of this token, though she is represented as affectionate to her mistress,
she never attempts to relieve her from her distress ; which she might
easily have done by demanding the handkerchief from her husband, or
divulging the story, if he refused to restore it.—But this would not have
served the plot. MALONE.

⁹ I being *opportunistically* here, took it up. JOHNSON.

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
 And let him find it: Trifles, light as air,
 Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong
 As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.
 The Moor already changes with my poison:—
 Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons,
 Which, at the first, are scarce found to distaste;
 But, with a little act upon the blood,
 Burn like the mines of sulphur.—I did say so:²—

Enter OTHELLO.

Look, where he comes! Not poppy, nor mandragora,³
 Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
 Shall ever med'cine thee to that sweet sleep
 Which thou ow'dst⁴ yesterday.

Oth.

Ha! ha! false to me?

To me?

Iago. Why, how now, general? no more of that.

Oth. Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the rack:—
 I swear, 'tis better to be much abus'd,
 Than but to know't a little.

Iago.

² Iago first ruminates on the qualities of the passion which he is labouring to excite; and then proceeds to comment on its effects. *Jealousy* (says he) *with the smallest operation on the blood, flames out with all the violence of sulphur, &c.*

“ — I did say so;

“ Look where he comes!” —

i. e. I knew that the least touch of such a passion would not permit the Moor to enjoy a moment of repose:—I have just said that jealousy is a restless commotion of the mind; and look where Othello approaches, to confirm the propriety and justice of my observation. STEEVENS.

As Mr. Steevens has by his interpretation elicited some meaning (though I still think an obscure one) out of this difficult hemistich, I readily retract an amendment I had formerly proposed, being of opinion that such bold and licentious conjectures can never be warranted, unless where the sense is quite desperate. BLACKSTONE.

³ The *mandragoras* or *mandrake* has a soporifick quality, and the ancients used it when they wanted an opiate of the most powerful kind.

STEEVENS.

⁴ To *owe* is, in our author, oftener to *possess*, than *to be indebted*, and such is its meaning here. JOHNSON.

Iago.

How now, my lord?

Oth. What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust?
I saw it not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:
I slept the next night well, was free and merry;
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips:
He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
Let him not know it, and he's not robb'd at all.

Iago. I am sorry to hear this.

Oth. I had been happy, if the general camp,
Pioneers and all,⁵ had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known: O now, for ever,
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,⁶

The

⁵ That is, the most abject and vilest of the camp. Pioneers were generally degraded soldiers, appointed to the office of pioneer, as a punishment for misbehaviour. GROSE.

⁶ In mentioning the *fife* joined with the *drum*, Shakspeare as usual, paints from the life; those instruments accompanying each other being used in his age by the English soldiery. The *fife*, however, as a martial instrument, was afterwards entirely discontinued among our troops for many years, but at length revived in the war before the last. It is commonly supposed that our soldiers borrowed it from the Highlanders in the last rebellion: but I do not know that the *fife* is peculiar to the Scotch, or even used at all by them. It was first used within the memory of man among our troops by the British guards, by order of the duke of Cumberland, when they were encamped at Maestricht, in the year 1747, and thence soon adopted into other English regiments of infantry. They took it from the Allies with whom they served. This instrument, accompanying the drum, is of considerable antiquity in the European armies, particularly the German. In a curious picture in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, painted 1525, representing the siege of Pavia by the French king where the emperor was taken prisoner, we see *fifes* and *drums*. In an old English treatise written by William Garrard before 1587, and published by one captain Hichcock in 1591, intitled *The Art of Warre*, there are several wood cuts of military evolutions, in which these instruments are both introduced. In *Rymer's Fœdera*, in a diary of king Henry's siege of Bulloigne 1544, mention is made of the *drommes* and *viffleurs* marching at the head of the king's army. Tom. xv. p. 53.

The *drum* and *fife* were also much used at ancient festivals, shows, and processions.

From

The royal banner ; and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war !
And O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewell ! Othello's occupation's gone !

Iago. Is it possible ?—My lord,—

Oth. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore ;
Be sure of it ; give me the ocular proof ;

[*Taking him by the throat.*
Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,⁷

Thou hadst been better have been born a dog,
Than answer my wak'd wrath.

Iago. Is it come to this ?

Oth. Make me to see it ; or (at the least) so prove it,
That the probation bear no hinge, nor loop,
To hang a doubt on : or, woe upon thy life !

Iago. My noble lord,—

Oth. If thou dost slander her, and torture me,
Never pray more : abandon all remorse ;⁸
On horror's head horrors accumulate :
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amaz'd,
For nothing canst thou to damnation add,
Greater than that.

Iago. O grace ! O heaven defend me !

Are

From the old French word *viffler*, above-cited, came the English word *whiffler*, which anciently was used in its proper *literal* sense. Strype, speaking of a grand tilting before the court in queen Mary's reign, 1554, says, from an old journal, that king Philip and the challengers entered the lists, preceded by "their *whifflers*, their footmen, and their armourers." Eccles. Memor. iii. p. 211.

By degrees, the word *whiffler* hence acquired the metaphorical meaning, which it at present obtains in common speech, and became an appellation of contempt. *Whiffler*, a light trivial character, a fellow hired to pipe at processions. T. WARTON.

⁷ Perhaps the quarto, 1622, more forcibly reads :
——— man's eternal soul,———.

Shakspeare might have designed an opposition between *man* and *dog*.
STEEVENS.

⁸ All tendernefs of nature, all pity ; in which sense, as Mr. Steevens as justly observed, the word was frequently used in Shakspeare's time. The next line shows it is used in this sense here. MALONE.

Are you a man? have you a soul, or sense?—
God be wi' you; take mine office.—O wretched fool,
That liv'st to make thine honesty a vice!—

O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,
To be direct and honest, is not safe.—

I thank you for this profit; and, from hence,
I'll love no friend, since love breeds such offence.

Oth. Nay, stay:—Thou should'st be honest.

Iago. I should be wise; for honesty's a fool,
And loses that it works for.

Oth. By the world,
I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not;
I'll have some proof: Her name, that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrim'd and black
As mine own face.—If there be cords, or knives,
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
I'll not endure it.—Would, I were satisfied!

Iago. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion:
I do repent me, that I put it to you.
You would be satisfied?

Oth. Would? nay, I will.

Iago. And may: But, how? how satisfied, my lord?
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?
Behold her tupp'd?⁹

Oth. Death and damnation! O!

Iago. It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
To bring them to that prospect: Damn them then,
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster,
More than their own! What then? how then?
What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
It is impossible, you should see this,
Were they as prime as goats,² as hot as monkeys,
As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
If imputation, and strong circumstances,—

Which

⁹ A ram in Staffordshire and some other counties is called a *tup*.

STEEVENS.

² *Prime* is *prompt*, from the Celtick or British *prim*. HANMER.
From *prim*, forward; French. RITSON.

Which lead directly to the door of truth,—

Will give you satisfaction, you may have it.

Oth. Give me a living reason³ she's disloyal.

Iago. I do not like the office :

But, sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,—

Prick'd to it by foolish honesty and love,—

I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately ;

And, being troubled with a raging tooth,

I could not sleep.

There are a kind of men so loose of soul,

That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs ;

One of this kind is Cassio :

In sleep I heard him say,—*Sweet Desdemona,*

Let us be wary, let us hide our loves !

And then, sir, would he gripe, and wring my hand,

Cry,—*O, sweet creature !* and then kifs me hard,

As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots,

That grew upon my lips : then lay'd his leg

Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kifs'd ; and then

Cry'd,—*Cursed fate ! that gave thee to the Moor !*

Oth. O monstrous ! monstrous !

Iago. Nay, this was but his dream.

Oth. But this denoted a foregone conclusion ;⁴

'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.⁵

Iago. And this may help to thicken other proofs,
That do demonstrate thinly.

Oth. I'll tear her all to pieces.

Iago.

³ *Living*, for speaking, manifest. WARBURTON.

A *living* reason is a reason founded on fact and experience, not on surmise or conjecture : a reason that convinces the understanding as perfectly as if the fact were exhibited *to the life*. MALONE.

What Othello here demands is *actual* proof, arising from some positive FACT. HENLEY.

⁴ *Conclusion*, for fact. WARBURTON.

A *conclusion* in Shakspeare's time meant an experiment or trial.

MALONE.

⁵ The old quarto gives this line, with the two following, to Iago ; and rightly. WARBURTON.

In the folio this line is given to Othello. MALONE.

I think it more naturally spoken by Othello, who, by dwelling so long upon the proof, encouraged Iago to enforce it. JOHNSON.

Iago. Nay, but be wise : yet we see nothing done ;⁶
 She may be honest yet. Tell me but this,—
 Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief,
 Spotted with strawberries, in your wife's hand ?

Oth. I gave her such a one ; 'twas my first gift.

Iago. I know not that : but such a handkerchief,
 (I am sure, it was your wife's) did I to-day,
 See Cassio wipe his beard with.

Oth. If it be that,—

Iago. If it be that, or any that was hers,
 It speaks against her, with the other proofs.

Oth. O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
 One is too poor, too weak for my revenge !
 Now do I see 'tis true.⁷—Look here, Iago ;
 All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven :
 'Tis gone.—

Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell !⁸
 Yield up, O love, thy crown, and hearted throne,⁹
 To tyrannous hate ! swell,² bosom, with thy fraught,
 For 'tis of aspicks' tongues !

Iago. Pray, be content.

Oth.

⁶ This is an oblique and secret mock at Othello's saying,—*Give me the ocular proof.* WARBURTON.

⁷ The old quarto reads :

Now do I see 'tis time.

And this is Shakspeare's, and has in it much more force and solemnity, and preparation for what follows : as alluding to what he had said before :

“ ————No, Iago!

“ I'll see before I doubt, when I doubt, prove ;

“ And, on the proof, there is no more but this,

“ *Away at once with love or jealousy.*”

This time was now come. WARBURTON.

⁸ Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio reads—from the hollow bell. Hollow, Dr. Warburton considers as “ a poor unmeaning epithet.”

MALONE.

I do not perceive that the epithet *hollow* is at all unmeaning, when applied to hell, as it gives the idea of what Milton calls,

“ ———— the void profound

“ Of unessential night.” STEEVENS

⁹ Hearted throne, is the heart on which thou wast enthroned.

JOHNSON.

² i. e. swell, because the fraught is of poison. WARBURTON.

Oth. O, blood, Iago, blood!

Iago. Patience, I say; your mind, perhaps, may change.

Oth. Never, Iago. Like to the Pontick sea,³
Whose icy current, and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontick and the Hellespont;
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable⁴ and wide revenge
Swallow them up.—Now, by yond' marble heaven,
In the due reverence of a sacred vow [Kneels.
I here engage my words.

Iago. Do not rise yet.— [Kneels.
Witness, you ever-burning lights above!
You elements that clip us round about!
Witness, that here Iago doth give up
The execution⁵ of his wit, hands, heart,
To wrong'd Othello's service! let him command,
And to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody work soever.⁶

Oth.

³ This simile is omitted in the first edition: I think it should be so, as an unnatural excursion in this place. POPE.

Every reader will, I durst say, abide by Mr. Pope's censure on this passage. When Shakspeare grew acquainted with such particulars of knowledge, he made a display of them as soon as opportunity offered. He found this in the 2d Book and 97th chapter of Pliny's *Natural History*, as translated by Philemon Holland, 1601.

Mr. Edwards, in his MS. notes, conceives this simile to allude to Sir Philip Sidney's device, whose impress, Camden, in his *Remains*, says, was the Caspian Sea, with this motto, *Sine refluxu*. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Capable* perhaps signifies ample, capacious.

It may, however, mean *judicious*. In *Hamlet* the word is often used in the sense of *intelligent*. MALONE.

Capable means, I suppose, *comprehensive*. STEEVENS.

⁵ By *execution* Shakspeare meant *employment* or *exercise*. STEEVENS.

⁶ Iago devotes himself to wronged Othello, and says, *Let him command whatever bloody business*, and in me it shall be an act, not of cruelty, but of *tenderness*, to obey him; not of malice to others, but of *tenderness* for him. If this sense be thought too violent, I see nothing better than to follow Mr. Pope's reading, as it is improved by Mr. Theobald.

JOHNSON.

Before I saw Dr. Johnson's edition of Shakspeare, my opinion of this passage

Oth. I greet thy love,
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous.
And will upon the instant put thee to't :
Within these three days let me hear thee say,
That Cassio's not alive.

Iago. My friend is dead ; 'tis done, at your request :
But let her live.

Oth. Damn her, lewd minx ! O, damn her !
Come, go with me apart ; I will withdraw,
To furnish me with some swift means of death
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

Iago. I am your own for ever. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

The same.

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Clown.

Des. Do you know, firrah, where lieutenant Cassio lies ?

Clo. I dare not say, he lies any where.

Des. Why, man ?

Clo. He is a soldier ; and for me to say a soldier lies,
is stabbing.

Des. Go to ; Where lodges he ?

Clo. To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you where I
lie.

Des. Can any thing be made of this ?

Clo. I know not where he lodges, and for me to devise a
lodging,

passage was formed, and written, and thus I understood it : " Let him
command any bloody business, and to obey him shall be in me an act of
pity and compassion for wrong'd Othello." *Remorse* frequently signifies
pity, mercy, compassion, or a tenderness of heart, unattended with the
stings of a guilty conscience. TOLLET.

If I am not deceived, this passage has been entirely mistaken. I read :

————— let him command,

An' to obey shall be in me remorse,

What bloody business ever—.

And for if is sufficiently common : and Othello's impatience breaks
off the sentence ; I think with additional beauty. FARMER.

lodging, and say—he lies here, or he lies there, were to lie in my own throat.

Des. Can you enquire him out, and be edified by report?

Clo. I will catechize the world for him; that is, make questions, and by them answer.⁷

Des. Seek him, bid him come hither: tell him, I have moved my lord in his behalf, and hope all will be well.

Clo. To do this is within the compass of man's wit; and therefore I will attempt the doing it. [Exit.]

Des. Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

Emil. I know not, madam.

Des. Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse Full of cruzadoes.⁸ And, but my noble Moor Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness As jealous creatures are, it were enough To put him to ill thinking.

Emil. Is he not jealous?

Des. Who, he? I think, the sun, where he was born, Drew all such humours from him.

Emil. Look, where he comes.

Des. I will not leave him now, till Cassio Be call'd to him.—How is't with you, my lord?

Enter

⁷ This *Clown* is a fool to some purpose. He was to seek for one; he says, he will ask for him, and by his own questions make answer. Without doubt we should read—and bid them answer; i. e. the world; those whom he questions. WARBURTON.

There is no necessity for changing the text. It is the clown's play to wrench what is said, from its proper meaning. Sir T. More hath briefly worked his character: "he plaieth the iester, nowe with skoffinge, and nowe with his overthwarte woords, to prouok all to laughter." His design here was to propose such questions as might elicit the information sought for from him, and therefore, BY his questions he might be enabled to answer. HENLEY.

And by them, when answered, form my own answer to you. The quaintness of the expression is in character. MALONE.

⁸ A Portuguese coin, in value three shillings sterling. GREY.

So called from the cross stamped upon it. JOHNSON.

The exact value of a cruzado is here of no importance, nor does it appear precisely what it was in Shakspeare's time. By a mercantile friend I am informed, that there are at present three sorts. The imaginary one of the value of 2s. or 2s. $\frac{1}{4}$, like the English pound, is only a denomination, and not a coin. The two other sorts are really coins, and all the three differ in value. REED.

Enter OTHELLO.

Oth. Well, my good lady :—[*Aside.*] O, hardness to dis-
semble!—

How do you, Desdemona?

Des. Well, my good lord.

Oth. Give me your hand: This hand is moist, my lady.

Des. It yet has felt no age, nor known no sorrow.

Oth. This argues fruitfulness, and liberal heart:
Hot, hot, and moist:⁹ This hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout;²
For here's a young and sweating devil here,
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
A frank one.

Des. You may, indeed, say so;
For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

Oth. A liberal hand: The hearts, of old, gave hands;
But our new heraldry is—hands, not hearts.³

Des.

⁹ Ben Jonson seems to have attempted a ridicule on this passage, in *Every Man out of his Humour*, Act V. sc. ii. where Sogliardo says to Savilina: “How does my sweet lady? *hot and moist?* beautiful and lusty?”

STEEVENS.

Ben Jonson was ready enough, on all occasions to depreciate and ridicule our author, but in the present instance, I believe, he must be acquitted; for *Every Man out of his Humour* was printed in 1600, and written probably in the preceding year; at which time, we are almost certain that *Othello* had not been exhibited. MALONE.

² *Exercise* was the religious term. Henry the Seventh (says Bacon) “had the fortune of a true *christian* as well as of a great king, in living *exercised*, and dying repentant.” MALONE.

³ It is evident that the first line should be read thus:

The *bands* of old gave *bearts*;

otherwise it would be no reply to the preceding words,

“For 'twas that *band* that gave away my *heart*.”

Not so, says her husband: *The bands of old indeed gave bearts; but the custom now is to give hands without bearts.* The expression of *new heraldry* was a satirical allusion to the times. Soon after King James the First came to the crown, he created the new dignity of baronets for money. Amongst their other prerogatives of honour, they had an addition to their paternal *arms*, of a hand *gules* in an *escutcheon argent*. And we are not to doubt but that this was the *new heraldry* alluded to by our au-
thor:

Des. I cannot speak of this. Come now your promise.

Oth. What promise, chuck?

Des.

thor: by which he insinuates, that some then created had *bands* indeed, but not *beats*; that is, *money* to pay for the *creation*, but no *virtue* to purchase the *honour*. But the finest part of the poet's address in this allusion, is the compliment he pays to his old mistress Elizabeth. For James's pretence for raising money by this creation, was the reduction of Ulster, and other parts of Ireland; the memory of which he would perpetuate by that addition to their arms, it being the arms of Ulster. Now the method used by Elizabeth in the reduction of that kingdom was so different from this, the dignities she conferred being on those who employed their *steel*, and not their *gold* in this service, that nothing could add more to her glory, than the being compared to her successor, in this point of view: nor was it uncommon for the dramatick poets of that time to satirize the ignominy of James's reign. So Fletcher, in *The Fair Maid of the Inn*. One says, *I will send thee to Amboyna in the East Indies for pepper*. The other replies, *To Amboyna? so I might be pepper'd*. Again, in the same play, a sailor says, *Despise not this pitch'd canvas, the time was, we have known them lined with Spanish ducats*.

WARBURTON.

The historical observation is very judicious and acute, but of the emendation there is no need. She says, that her hand gave away *her heart*. He goes on with his suspicion, and the hand which he had before called *frank*, he now terms *liberal*; then proceeds to remark, that *the hand was formerly given by the heart*; but now it neither gives it, nor is given by it. JOHNSON.

I think, with Dr. Warburton, that the new order of baronets is here again alluded to. See *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Vol. III. p. 356, and Spelman's Epigram there cited:

“ ————— florentis nomen honoris

“ Indicat in clypei fronte cruenta manus.

“ Non quod sævi aliquid, aut stricto fortiter ense

“ Hostibus occisis gesserit iste cohors. BLACKSTONE.

The reader will not find the epigram alluded to by Sir William Blackstone, in the page to which he has referred [in my edition], for I have omitted that part of his note, (an omission of which I have there given notice,) because it appeared to me extremely improbable that any passage in that play should allude to an event that did not take place till 1611. The omitted words I add here, (distinguishing them by Italick characters,) as they may appear to add weight to his opinion and that of Dr. Warburton.

“ I suspect this is an oblique reflection on the prodigality of James the First in bestowing these honours, and erecting a new order of knighthood called baronets; which few of the ancient gentry would condescend to accept. See Sir Henry Spelman's epigram on them, GLOSS. p. 76, which ends thus:

————— dum

Des. I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

Oth. I have a salt and sullen rheum⁴ offends me;
Lend me thy handkerchief.

Des. Here, my lord.

Oth. That which I gave you.

Des. I have it not about me.

Oth. Not?

Des. No, indeed, my lord.

Oth.

“ ————— *dum cauponare recusant*

“ *Ex verâ geniti nobilitate viri;*

“ *Interea è caulis hic prorepit, ille tabernis,*

“ *Et modo fit dominus, qui modo servus erat.*

See another stroke at them in *Othello*.” MALONE.

My respect for the sentiments of Sir William Blackstone might have induced me to print both them, and the epigram referred to, in both places, even if the preceding remark of Mr. Malone had not, in this second instance, afforded them an apt introduction. STEEVENS.

I believe this to be only a figurative expression, without the least reference to king James's creation of baronets. The absurdity of making Othello so familiar with British heraldry, the utter want of consistency as well as policy in any sneer of Shakspeare at the badge of honours instituted by a Prince whom on all other occasions he was solicitous to flatter, and at whose court this very piece was acted in 1613, most strongly incline me to question the propriety of Dr. Warburton's historical explanation. STEEVENS.

To almost every sentence of Dr. Warburton's note, an objection may be taken; but I have preserved it as a specimen of this commentator's manner.

It is not true that king James created the order of baronets soon after he came to the throne. It was created in the year 1611.—The conceit that by the word *hearts* the poet meant to allude to the gallantry of the reign of Elizabeth, in which men distinguished themselves by their *steel*, and that by *bands* those courtiers were pointed at, who served her inglorious successor only by their *gold*, is too fanciful to deserve an answer.

In various parts of our poet's works he has alluded to the custom of plighting troth by the union of hands.

The hearts of old, says Othello, dictated the union of *bands*, which formerly were joined with *the hearts* of the parties in them; but in our modern marriages, *bands* alone are united, without *hearts*. Such evidently is the plain meaning of the words. I do not, however, undertake to maintain that the poet, when he used the word *heraldry*, had not the new order of baronets in his thoughts, without intending any satirical allusion. MALONE.

⁴ Thus the quarto, 1622. The folio, for *sullen*, has *sorry*. MALONE.
Sullen, that is, a *rheum* obstinately troublesome. I think this better.

JOHNSON.

Oth.

That is a fault :

That handkerchief
 Did an Egyptian to my mother give;⁵
 She was a charmer,⁶ and could almost read
 The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it,
 'Twould make her amiable, and subdue my father
 Entirely to her love; but if she lost it,
 Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
 Should hold her loathly, and his spirits should hunt
 After new fancies: She, dying, gave it me;

And

⁵ In the account of this tremendous handkerchief, are some particulars, which lead me to think that here is an allusion to a fact, heightened by poetical imagery. It is the practice in the eastern regions, for persons of both sexes to carry handkerchiefs very curiously wrought. In the MS. papers of Sir John Chardin, that great oriental traveller, is a passage which fully describes the custom. "The mode of wrought handkerchiefs (says this learned enquirer), is general in Arabia, in Syria, in Palestine, and generally in all the Turkish empire. They are wrought with a needle, and it is the amusement of the fair sex there, as among us the making tapestry and lace. The young women make them for their fathers, their brothers, and by way of preparation before hand for their spouses, bestowing them as favours on their lovers. They have them almost constantly in their hands in those warm countries, to wipe off sweat." But whether this circumstance ever came to Shakspeare's knowledge, and gave rise to the incident, I am not able to determine. WHALLEY.

Shakspeare found in Cinthio's novel the incident of Desdemona's losing a handkerchief finely wrought in Morisco work, which had been presented to her by her husband, or rather of its being stolen from her by the villain who afterwards by his machinations robbed her of her life. The eastern custom of brides presenting such gifts to their husbands, certainly did not give rise to the incident on which this tragedy turns, though Shakspeare should seem to have been apprized of it. However the preceding note is retained as illustrative of the passage before us. MALONE.

⁶ Deut. xviii. 11. there is an injunction, "Let none be found among you that is a Charmer." In Perkins's *Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 8vo. 1610, it is said that "Inchantment is the working of wonders by a charme;" and a charm is afterwards defined, "a spell or verse, consisting of strange words, used as a signe or watchword to the Devil to cause him to worke wonders." In this Discourse is an enumeration of the wonders done by inchanters, as raising storms and tempests, &c. and at the conclusion it is said, "—by witches we understand not those only which kill and torment, but all diviners, charmers, jugglers, all wizards, commonly called wise men and wise women; yea, whosoever do any thing (knowing what they do) which cannot be effected by nature or art." REED.

And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
To give it her. I did so: and take heed of't,
Make it a darling like your precious eye;
To lose or give't away, were such perdition,
As nothing else could match.

Des. Is it possible?

Oth. 'Tis true: there's magick in the web of it:
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
The sun to make⁷ two hundred compasses,
In her prophetick fury sew'd the work:
The worms were hallow'd, that did breed the silk;
And it was dy'd in mummy,⁸ which the skilful
Conserv'd of maidens' hearts.

Des. Indeed! is't true?

Oth. Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

Des. Then 'would to heaven, that I had never seen it.

Oth. Ha! wherefore?

Des. Why do you speak so startlingly and rash?⁹

Oth. Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out of the way?

Des. Heaven blefs us!

Oth. Say you?

Des. It is not lost; But what an if it were?

Oth. Ha!

Des. I say, it is not lost.

Oth. Fetch't, let me see it.

Des. Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now;

This is a trick, to put me from my suit;

I pray, let Cassio be receiv'd again.

Oth. Fetch me that handkerchief: my mind misgives.

Des. Come, come;

You'll

⁷ That is, numbered the sun's courses: badly expressed.

WARBURTON.

The expression is not very infrequent: we say, *I counted the clock to strike four*; so she number'd the sun to course, to run two hundred compasses, two hundred annual circuits. JOHNSON.

⁸ The balsamick liquor running from *mummies* was formerly celebrated for its anti-epileptick virtues. We are now wise enough to know, that the qualities ascribed to it are all imaginary; and yet this fanciful medicine still holds a place in the principal shops where drugs are sold.

Mummy, however, is still much coveted by painters, as a transparent brown colour that throws a warmth into their shadows. STEEVENS.

⁹ — rash? is vehement, violent. JOHNSON.

You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

Oth. The handkerchief,—

Des. I pray, talk me of Cassio.

Oth. The handkerchief,—

Des. A man that, all his time,

Hath founded his good fortune on your love;

Shar'd dangers with you;—

Oth. The handkerchief,—

Des. In sooth,

You are to blame.

Oth. Away! [Exit OTHELLO.

Emil. Is not this man jealous?

Des. I ne'er saw this before.

Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief:

I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

Emil. 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man:²

They are all but stomachs, and we all but food;

They eat us hungerly, and when they are full,

They belch us. Look you! Cassio, and my husband.

Enter IAGO and CASSIO.

Iago. There is no other way; 'tis she must do't;
And, lo, the happiness! go, and importune her.

Des.

² From this line it may be conjectured, that the author intended the action of this play to be considered as longer than is marked by any note of time. Since their arrival at Cyprus, to which they were hurried on their wedding-night, the fable seems to have been in one continual progress, nor can I see any vacuity into which a year or two, or even a month or two, could be put. On the night of Othello's arrival, a feast was proclaimed; at that feast Cassio was degraded, and immediately applies to Desdemona to get him restored. Iago, indeed, advises Othello to hold him off awhile, but there is no reason to think, that he has been held off long. A little longer interval would increase the probability of the story, though it might violate the rules of the drama. See Act V. sc. ii.

JOHNSON.

This line has no reference to the duration of the action of this play, or to the length of time that Desdemona had been married. What Emilia says, is a sort of proverbial remark, of general application, where a definitive time is put for an indefinite. Besides, there is no necessity for fixing the commencement of Emilia's year or two, to the time of the marriage or the opening of the piece. She would with more propriety refer to the beginning of the acquaintance and intimacy between the married couple, which might extend beyond that period. STEEVENS.

Des. How now, good Cassio? what's the news with you?

Cas. Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you,
That, by your virtuous means, I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love,
Whom I, with all the duty of my heart,³
Entirely honour; I would not be delay'd:
If my offence be of such mortal kind,
That neither service past, nor present sorrows,
Nor purpos'd merit in futurity,
Can ransom me into his love again,
But to know so must be my benefit;
So shall I clothe me in a forc'd content,
And shut myself up in some other course,
To fortune's alms.⁴

Des.

³ The elder quarto reads,

——— *the duty of my heart,* ———.

The author used the more proper word, and then changed it I suppose, for fashionable diction; [*"the office of my heart,"* the reading of the folio;] but, as fashion is a very weak protectress, the old word is now ready to resume its place. JOHNSON.

Office may be the true reading. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Shoot* is the reading of one of the early quartos. JOHNSON.

I cannot help thinking this reading to be the true one. The idea seems taken from the confinement of a monastick life. The words, *forc'd content*, help to confirm the supposition. The meaning will therefore be, "I will put on a constrained appearance of being contented, and shut myself up in a different course of life, no longer to depend on my own efforts, but to wait for relief from the accidental hand of charity." STEEVENS.

To fortune's alms means, waiting patiently for whatever bounty fortune or chance may bestow upon me. MALONE.

I cannot agree with Steevens in approving of the present reading, nor of course, in his explanation of this passage, but think the quarto right, which reads *shoot* instead of *shut*.—To say that a man will shut himself up in a course of life, is language such as Shakspeare would never make use of, even in his most whimsical or licentious moments.

One of the meanings of the verb *to shoot*, is to *push suddenly*, or to *push forward*; and in that sense it is used in this place. Cassio means to say, that if he finds he has no chance of regaining the favour of the general, he will push forward into some other line of life, and seek his fortune; but I think it probable we ought to read:

And shoot myself upon some other course,
instead of *up in some other course*. M. MASON.

Mr. M. Mason's explanation is a very forced one.—It appears from the information of Iago, that Cassio had not long been a soldier. Before

Othello

Des. Alas! thrice-gentle Cassio,
 My advocacy is not now in tune;
 My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him,
 Were he in favour,⁵ as in humour, alter'd.
 So help me every spirit sanctified,
 As I have spoken for you all my best;
 And stood within the blank of his displeasure,⁶
 For my free speech! You must a while be patient:
 What I can do, I will; and more I will,
 Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you.

Iago. Is my lord angry?

Emil. He went hence but now,
 And, certainly, in strange unquietness.

Iago. Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,
 When it hath blown his ranks into the air;⁷
 And, like the devil, from his very arm
 Puff'd his own brother;—And can he be angry?
 Something of moment, then: I will go meet him;
 There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.

Des. I pr'ythee, do so.—Something, sure, of state,—

[*Exit IAGO.*

Either from Venice; or some unhatch'd practice,⁸
 Made démonstrable here in Cyprus to him,—
 Hath puddled his clear spirit: and, in such cases,
 Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
 Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;
 For let our finger ach, and it indues
 Our other healthful members ev'n to that sense

Of

Othello promoted him, for his good offices in respect to Desdemona, he was “a great arithmetician, a countercafter;” and now, being discarded from the military line, he purposes to *confine* or *shut himself up*, as he formerly had, within the limits of a new profession. HENLEY.

⁵ In *look*, in *countenance*. JOHNSON.

⁶ Within the *shot* of his anger. JOHNSON.

⁷ In Iago's speech something is suppressed. He means to say, I have seen his ranks blown into the air, and his own brother puff'd from his side,—and *mean while* have seen him quite cool and unruffled. And can he now be angry? MALONE.

⁸ Some treason that has not taken effect. JOHNSON.

Of pain :⁹ Nay, we must think, men are not gods;
 Nor of them look for such observances
 As fit the bridal.²—Beshrew me much, Emilia,
 I was (unhandsome warrior as I am,³)
 Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;
 But now I find, I had suborn'd the witness,
 And he's indicted falsely.

Emil. Pray heaven, it be state matters, as you think;
 And no conception, nor no jealous toy,
 Concerning you.

Des. Alas, the day! I never gave him cause.

Emil. But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;
 They are not ever jealous for the cause,
 But jealous for they are jealous: 'tis a monster,
 Begot upon itself, born on itself.

Des. Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!

Emil. Lady, amen.

Des. I will go seek him.—Cassio walk here-about:
 If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit,
 And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

Cas. I humbly thank your ladyship.

[*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA.*]

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. Save you friend Cassio!

Cas. What make you from home?
 How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?
 I'faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

Bian. And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
 What! keep a week away? seven days and nights?
 Eight score eight hours? and lovers' absent hours,
 More tedious than the dial eight score times?
 O weary reckoning!

Cas.

⁹ I believe it should be rather, Subdues our other healthful members to a sense of pain. JOHNSON.

To *indue* appears to have signified in Shakspeare's time, to *tincture*, or *embrace*, and is so used here. MALONE.

How a member is to be *tinctured* or *embrewed* to any particular sensation, I am glad it is not my office to explain. STEEVENS.

² i. e. the nuptial feast; a Saxon word. STEEVENS.

³ *Unhandsome warrior*, is evidently *unfair assailant*. JOHNSON.

Cas. Pardon me, Bianca;
 I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd;
 But I shall, in a more continue time,⁴
 Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,
 [Giving her *DESDEMONA's* handkerchief.
 Take me this work out.⁵

Bian. O, Cassio, whence came this?
 This is some token from a newer friend.
 To the felt absence now I feel a cause:
 Is it come to this? Well, well.

Cas. Woman, go to!
 Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,
 From whence you have them. You are jealous now;
 That this is from some mistress, some remembrance:
 No, in good troth, Bianca.

Bian. Why, whose is it?

Cas. I know not, sweet: I found it in my chamber.
 I like the work well; ere it be demanded,
 (As like enough, it will,) I'd have it copied:
 Take it, and do't; and leave me for this time.

Bian. Leave you! wherefore?

Cas. I do attend here on the general;
 And think it no addition, nor my wish,
 To have him see me woman'd.

Bian. Why, I pray you?

Cas. Not, that I love you not.

Bian. But that you do not love me.
 I pray you, bring me on the way a little;
 And say, if I shall see you soon at night.

Cas. 'Tis but a little way, that I can bring you,
 For I attend here: but I'll see you soon.

Bian. 'Tis very good; I must be circumstanc'd.⁶ [Exeunt.

⁴ A more continue time is time less interrupted, time which I can call more my own. It gives a more distinct image than convenient. JOHNSON.

⁵ The meaning is not, "Pick out the work, and leave the ground plain;" but, "Copy this work in another handkerchief." JOHNSON.

⁶ Your civility is now grown conditional. WARBURTON.

Rather, I must give way to circumstances. M. MASON.

Particular circumstances and your own convenience have, I see, more weight with you than Bianca has. I must be postponed to these considerations. MALONE.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

*The same.**Enter OTHELLO and IAGO.**Iago.* Will you think so?*Oth.* Think so, Iago?*Iago.* What,

To kiss in private?

Oth. An unauthoriz'd kiss.*Iago.* Or to be naked with her friend abed,
An hour, or more, not meaning any harm?*Oth.* Naked abed, Iago, and not mean harm?
It is hypocrisy against the devil:⁷They⁷ that mean virtuously, and yet do so,
The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.⁸*Iago.* So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip:

But

⁷ This observation seems strangely abrupt and unoccasioned. We must suppose that Iago had, before they appeared in this scene, been applying cases of false comfort to Othello; as that though the parties had been even found in bed together, there might be no harm done; it might be only for the trial of their virtue; as was reported of the Romish saint, Robert D'Arbrissel and his nuns: To this we must suppose Othello here replies; and like a good protestant. For so the sentiment does but suit the character of the speaker, Shakspeare little heeds how these sentiments are circumstanced. **WARBURTON.**

Hypocrisy against the devil, means hypocrisy to cheat the devil. As common hypocrites cheat men, by seeming good, and yet living wickedly, these men would cheat the devil, by giving him flattering hopes, and at last avoiding the crime which he thinks them ready to commit.

JOHNSON.

⁸ The true key to the explanation of this passage may be found in *St. Matthew*, iv. 7. The poet's idea, is, that *the devil tempts their virtues*, by stirring up their passions, and *they tempt heaven*, by placing themselves in such a situation as makes it scarcely possible to avoid falling by the gratification of them. **HENLEY.**

As the devil makes a trial of their virtue by often throwing temptation in their way, so they presumptuously make a trial whether the divine goodness will enable them to resist a temptation which they have voluntarily created for themselves, or abandon them to the government of their passions. **MALONE.**

But if I give my wife a handkerchief, —

Oth. What then?

Iago. Why, then 'tis hers, my lord; and, being hers, She may, I think, bestow't on any man.

Oth. She is protectress of her honour too; May she give that?

Iago. Her honour is an essence that's not seen; They have it very oft, that have it not: But, for the handkerchief, —

Oth. By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it: — Thou said'st, — O, it comes o'er my memory, As doth the raven o'er the infected house, Boding to all,⁹ — he had my handkerchief.

Iago. Ay, what of that?

Oth. That's not so good, now.

Iago. What, if I had said, I had seen him do you wrong?

Or heard him say, — As knaves be such abroad, Who having, by their own importunate suit, Or voluntary dotage of some mistress, Convinced or supplied them,² cannot choose But they must blab —

Oth. Hath he said any thing?

Iago. He hath, my lord; but be you well assur'd, No more than he'll unswear.

Oth. What hath he said?

Iago. 'Faith, that he did, — I know not what he did.³

Oth. What? what?

Iago.

Shakspeare had probably in view a very popular book of his time, *The Beehive of the Roman Church*. "There was an old wife, called *Julia*, which would take the young men and maides, and lay them together in a bed. And for that they should not one byte another, nor kicke backewardest with their heeles, she did lay a crucifix between them."

FARMER.

⁹ Thus all the old copies. The moderns less grammatically,

Boding to ill ——— JOHNSON.

The raven was thought to be a constant attendant on a house, in which there was infection. MALONE.

² Dr. Farmer is of opinion that *supplied* has here the same meaning as supplicated. STEEVENS.

³ I believe that the line should be pointed thus:

'Faith, that he did I know not what; — he d.d. M. MASON.

Iago. Lie ———

Oth. With her?

Iago. With her, on her; what you will.

Oth. Lie with her! lie on her!—We say, lie on her, when they belie her: Lie with her! that's fulsome.—Handkerchief,—confessions,—handkerchief.—To confess, and be hang'd ⁴ for his labour.—First, to be hanged, and then to confess:—I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion,⁵ without some instruction.⁶ It is not words, that shake me thus:—Pish!—Noses, ears,

⁴ This is a proverbial saying. STEEVENS.

⁵ The modern editions have left out *passion*. JOHNSON.

⁶ The starts and broken reflections in this speech have something very terrible, and shew the mind of the speaker to be in inexpressible agonies. But the words we are upon, when set right, have a sublime in them that can never be enough admired. The ridiculous blunder of writing *instruction* for *induction* (for so it should be read) has indeed sunk it into arrant nonsense. Othello is just going to fall into a swoon; and as is common for people in that circumstance, feels an unusual mist and darkness, accompanied with horror, coming upon him. This, with vast sublimity of thought, is compared to the season of the sun's eclipse, at which time the earth becomes shadowed by the *induction* or bringing over of the moon between it and the sun. This being the allusion, the reasoning stands thus: "My nature could never be thus overshadowed, and falling, as it were, into dissolution, for no cause. There must be an *induction* of something: there must be a real cause. My jealousy cannot be merely imaginary. Ideas, *words* only, could not shake me thus, and raise all this disorder. My jealousy, therefore, must be grounded on matter of fact."

"A dire *induction* am I witness to." WARBURTON.

This is a noble conjecture, and whether right or wrong does honour to its author. Yet I am in doubt whether there is any necessity of emendation. There has always prevailed in the world an opinion, that when any great calamity happens at a distance, notice is given of it to the sufferer by some dejection or perturbation of mind, of which he discovers no external cause. This is ascribed to that general communication of one part of the universe with another, which is called sympathy and antipathy; or to the secret monition, *instruction*, and influence of a superior Being, which superintends the order of nature and of life. Othello says, *Nature could not bear herself in such shadowing passion without instruction. It is not words that shake me thus.* This passion, which spreads its clouds over me, is the effect of some agency more than the operation of words; it is one of those notices, which men have, of unseen calamities. JOHNSON.

However

ears, and lips :?—Is it possible?—Confess!—Handkerchief!
—O devil!— [Falls in a trance.

Iago. Work on,
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;
And many worthy and chaste dames, even thus
All guiltless meet reproach.—What, ho! my lord!

Enter CASSIO.

My lord, I say! Othello!—How now, Cassio?

Cas. What is the matter?

Iago. My lord is fallen into an epilepsy;
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

Cas. Rub him about the temples.

Iago. No, forbear:

The lethargy must have his quiet course:

If not, he foams at mouth; and, by and by,
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs:

Do you withdraw yourself a little while,

He will recover straight; when he is gone,

I would on great occasion speak with you.— [Exit CAS.

How is it, general? have you not hurt your head?

Oth. Dost thou mock me?

Iago.

I mock you! no, by heaven:
'Would,

However ingenious Dr. Warburton's note may be, it is certainly too forced and far-fetched. Othello alludes only to Cassio's dream, which had been invented and told him by Iago. When many confused and interesting ideas pour in upon the mind all at once, and with such rapidity that it has not time to shape or digest them, if it does not relieve itself by tears (which we know it often does, whether for joy or grief) it produces stupefaction and fainting.

Othello, in broken sentences and single words, all of which have a reference to the cause of his jealousy, shows, that all the proofs are present at once to his mind, which so over-powers it, that he falls into a trance, the natural consequence. SIR J. REYNOLDS.

I believe, the text, as it stands, is perfectly right, and that Othello's allusion is to his present and uncommon sensations. STEEVENS.

7 Othello is imagining to himself the familiarities which he supposes to have passed between Cassio and his wife.

If this be not the meaning, we must suppose he is meditating a cruel punishment for Desdemona and her suspected paramour. STEEVENS.

¹Would, you would bear your fortunes like a man.

Oth. A horned man's a monster, and a beast.

Iago. There's many a beast then in a populous city,
And many a civil monster.

Oth. Did he confess it?

Iago.

Good, fir, be a man ;
Think, every bearded fellow, that's but yok'd,
May draw with you : there's millions now alive,
That nightly lie in those unproper beds,⁹
Which they dare swear peculiar ; your case is better.
O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
To lip a wanton in a secure couch,²
And to suppose her chaste ! No, let me know ;
And, knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

Oth. O, thou art wise ; 'tis certain.

Iago.

Stand you a while apart ;
Confine yourself but in a patient list.³
Whilst you were here, ere while mad with your grief,
(A passion most unsuited such a man,)
Cassio came hither : I shifted him away,
And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy ;
Bade him anon return, and here speak with me ;
The which he promis'd. Do but encave yourself,⁴
And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns,
That dwell in every region of his face ;⁵
For I will make him tell the tale anew,—
Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when
He hath, and is again to cope your wife ;
I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience ;
Or I shall say, your are all in all in spleen,⁶

And

⁹ *Unproper*, for common. WARBURTON.

² In a couch, in which he is lulled into a false security and confidence in his wife's virtue. A Latin sense. MALONE.

³ *List*, or *lists*, is *barriers*, *bounds*. Keep your temper, says Iago, within the *bounds of patience*.

⁴ Hide yourself in a private place. JOHNSON.

⁵ Congreve might have had this passage in his memory, when he made Lady Touchwood say to Maskell—"Ten thousand meanings lurk in each corner of that various face. STEEVENS.

⁶ I read :

"Or shall I say, you're all in all a spleen."

I think our author uses this expression elsewhere. JOHNSON.

And nothing of a man.

Oth. Dost thou hear, Iago?
I will be found most cunning in my patience;
But (dost thou hear?) most bloody.

Iago. That's not amiss;
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?

[OTHELLO withdraws.]

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
A housewife, that, by selling her desires,
Buys herself bread and clothes: it is a creature,
That dotes on Cassio,—as 'tis the strumpet's plague,
To beguile many, and be beguil'd by one;—
He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain
From the excess of laughter:—Here he comes——

Re-enter CASSIO.

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;
And his unbookish⁷ jealousy must construe
Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behaviour,
Quite in the wrong.—How do you now, lieutenant?

Cas. The worser, that you give me the addition,
Whose want even kills me.

Iago. Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure of't.
Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power, [*Speaking lower.*
How quickly should you speed?

Cas. Alas, poor caitiff!!

Oth. Look, how he laughs already! [*Aside.*

Iago. I never knew a woman love man so.

Cas. Alas, poor rogue! I think, i'faith, she loves me.

Oth. Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out. [*Aside.*

Iago. Do you hear, Cassio?

Oth. Now he importunes him

To tell it o'er: Go to; well said, well said. [*Aside.*

Iago. She gives it out, that you shall marry her:
Do you intend it?

Cas. Ha, ha, ha!

Oth. Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?⁸ [*Aside.*

Cas.

⁷ *Unbookish*, for ignorant. WARBURTON.

⁸ Othello calls him *Roman* ironically. *Triumph*, which was a Roman ceremony, brought Roman into his thoughts. *What* (says he) *you are now triumphing as great as a Roman?* JOHNSON.

Cas. I marry her!—what? a customer!⁸ I pr'ythee, bear some charity to my wit; do not think it so unwholesome. Ha, ha, ha!

Oth. So, so, so, so: They laugh, that win. [*Aside.*

Iago. 'Faith, the cry goes, that you shall marry her.

Cas. Pr'ythee, say true.

Iago. I am a very villain else.

Oth. Have you scored me?⁹ Well. [*Aside.*

Cas. This is the monkey's own giving out: she is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise.

Oth. Iago beckons me: now he begins the story. [*Aside.*

Cas. She was here even now; she haunts me in every place. I was, the other day, talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians; and thither comes the bauble; by this hand, she falls thus about my neck;—

Oth. Crying, O dear Cassio! as it were: his gesture imports it. [*Aside.*

Cas. So hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me; so hales, and pulls me: ha, ha, ha!—

Oth. Now he tells, how she pluck'd him to my chamber: O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to. [*Aside.*

Cas. Well, I must leave her company.

Iago. Before me! look, where she comes.

Enter BIANCA.

Cas. 'Tis such another fitchew!² marry, a perfumed one. —What do you mean by this haunting of me?

Bian.

⁸ A common woman, one that invites custom. JOHNSON.

⁹ Have you made my reckoning? have you settled the term of my life? The old quarto reads—*scored* me. Have you disposed of me? have you laid me up? JOHNSON.

To *score* originally meant no more than to cut a notch upon a tally, or to mark out a form by indenting it on any substance.

But it was soon figuratively used for setting a *brand* or *mark* of disgrace on any one. "Let us *score* their backs," says Scarus, in *Antony and Cleopatra*; and it is employed in the same sense on the present occasion.

STEEVENS.

But in the passage before us our poet might have been thinking of the ignominious punishment of slaves. MALONE.

² A polecat. POPE.

Shakspeare

Bian. Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief, you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the whole work? A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work? There,—give it your hobby-horse: wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

Cas. How now, my sweet Bianca? how now? how now?

Oth. By heaven, that should be my handkerchief! [*Aside.*

Bian. An you'll come to supper to-night, you may: an you will not, come when you are next prepared for. [*Exit.*

Iago. After her, after her.

Cas. 'Faith I must, she'll rail in the street else.

Iago. Will you sup there?

Cas. 'Faith, I intend so.

Iago. Well, I may chance to see you; for I would very fain speak with you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, come; Will you?

Iago. Go to; say no more. [*Exit CASSIO.*

Oth. How shall I murder him, Iago?

Iago. Did you perceive how he laugh'd at his vice?

Oth. O, Iago!

Iago. And did you see the handkerchief?

Oth. Was that mine?

Iago. Yours, by this hand: and to see how he prizes the foolish woman, your wife! she gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

Oth. I would have him nine years a killing:—
A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

Iago. Nay, you must forget that.

Oth. Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damn'd to-night;
for

Shakespeare has in another place mentioned the lust of this animal. He tells Iago, that she is as lewd as the *polecat*, but of better scent, the polecat being a very stinking animal. JOHNSON.

By "another place," Dr. Johnson means—*King Lear*:

"The *fitcheew*, nor the soiled horse, goes to't.

"With a more riotous appetite."

A *po'ecat* therefore was anciently one of the cant terms for a strumpet.

STEVENS.

for she shall not live: No, my heart is turn'd to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand.³ O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him talks.

Iago. Nay, that's not your way.

Oth. Hang her! I do but say what she is:—So delicate with her needle!—An admirable musician! O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear!—Of so high and plenteous wit and invention!—

Iago. She's the worse for all this.

Oth. O, a thousand, a thousand times:—And then, of so gentle a condition!⁴—

Iago. Ay, too gentle.

Oth. Nay, that's certain: But yet the pity of it, Iago!—O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

Iago. If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend; for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

Oth. I will chop her into messes:—Cuckold me!

Iago. O, 'tis foul in her.

Oth. With mine officer!

Iago. That's fouler.

Oth. Get me some poison, Iago; this night:—I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again:—this night, Iago.

Iago. Do it not with poison; strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

Oth. Good, good: the justice of it pleases; very good.

Iago. And, for Cassio,—let me be his undertaker: You shall hear more by midnight. [*A trumpet within.*]

Oth. Excellent good.—What trumpet is that fame?

Iago. Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lodovico, Come from the Duke: and, see, your wife is with him.

Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants.

Lod. 'Save you, worthy general!

Oth.

³ This thought, as often as it occurs to Shakspeare, is sure to be received, and as often counteracts his *pathos*. STEEVENS.

⁴ i. e. of so sweet a disposition. So, in *King Henry V*: "Our tongue is rough, coz, and my condition is not smooth." MALONE.

Oth. With all my heart, fir.⁵

Lod. The Duke and fenators of Venice greet you.

[Gives him a packet.]

Oth. I kifs the instrument of their pleasures.

[Opens the packet, and reads.]

Des. And what's the news, good coufin Lodovico?

Iago. I am very glad to fee you, signior;

Welcome to Cyprus.

Lod. I thank you; How does lieutenant Caffio?

Iago. Lives, fir.

Des. Cousin, there's fallen between him and my lord
An unkind breach: but you fhall make all well.

Oth. Are you fure of that?

Des. My lord?

Oth. *This fail you not to do, as you will—* [Reads.]

Lod. He did not call; he's bufy in the paper.

Is there divifion 'twixt thy lord and Caffio?

Des. A moft unhappy one; I would do much

To atone them,⁶ for the love I bear to Caffio.

Oth. Fire and brimftone!

Des. My lord?

Oth. Are you wife?

Des. What, is he angry?

Lod. 'May be, the letter mov'd him;

For, as I think, they do command him home,

Deputing Caffio in his government.

Des. By my troth, I'm glad on't.

Oth. Indeed?

Des. My lord?

Oth. I am glad to fee you mad.

Des. How, fweet Othello?

Oth. Devil! [Striking her.]

Des. I have not deferv'd this.

Lod. My lord, this would not be believ'd in Venice,

Though

⁵ This does not relate to what *Lodovico* has juft faid, but is fpoken by *Othello* while he falutes him. MALONE.

If it be urged, that "*save you*" only means *preserve you in this world*, my fenfe of the paffage will not be much weakened; as our protection,

"Even *here*, upon this bank and fhoad of time," depends on the Almighty. STEEVENS.

⁶ Make them *one*; reconcile them. JOHNSON.

Though I should swear I saw it : 'Tis very much ;
Make her amends, she weeps.

Oth. O devil, devil !

If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,⁷
Each drop she falls⁸ would prove a crocodile :—
Out of my fight !

Des. I will not stay to offend you. [Going.

Lod. Truly, an obedient lady :—

I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

Oth. Mistress,——

Des. My lord ?

Oth. What would you with her, sir ?

Lod. Who, I, my lord ?

Oth. Ay ; you did wish, that I would make her turn :
Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,
And turn again : and she can weep, sir, weep ;
And she's obedient, as you say,—obedient,—
Very obedient ;—Proceed you in your tears.⁹—
Concerning this, sir,—O well-painted passion !
I am commanded home :²—Get you away :
I'll send for you anon.—Sir, I obey the mandate,

And

⁷ If women's tears could impregnate the earth. By the doctrine of equivocal generation, new animals were supposed producible by new combinations of matter. See Bacon. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare here alludes to the fabulous accounts of crocodiles. Each tear, says Othello which falls from the false Desdemona, would generate a crocodile, the most deceitful of all animals, and whose own tears are proverbially fallacious.

It appears from Bullekar, that a dead crocodile, “ but in perfect forme,” of about nine feet long, had been exhibited in London, in our poet's time.” MALONE.

⁸ To *fall* is here a verb active. STEEVENS.

⁹ I cannot think that the poet meant to make Othello bid Desdemona to continue weeping, which *proceed you in your tears* (as the passage is at present pointed) must mean. He rather would have said :

—— Proceed you in your tears ?

What ! will you still continue to be a hypocrite by a display of this *well-painted passion* ? WARNER.

I think the old punctuation the true one. MALONE.

² The quarto, 1622, reads, perhaps better,—*I am commanded here : —I am commanded here*, may be an indignant sentiment of Othello :—“ I have an officer *here* placed over my head : I am now under the command of another :” i. e. of Cassio, to whom the government of Cyprus was just transferred. STEEVENS.

And will return to Venice;—Hence, avaunt!

[Exit DESDEMONA.]

Cassio shall have my place.³ And,—sir, to-night,
I do intreat that we may sup together.

You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus.—Goats and monkies!⁴

[Exit.]

Lod. Is this the noble Moor, whom our full senate
Call— all-in-all sufficient? This the noble nature
Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue
The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,
Could neither graze,⁵ nor pierce?

Iago. He is much chang'd.

Lod. Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?

Iago.

³ Perhaps this is addressed to Desdemona, who had just expressed her joy on hearing Cassio was deputed in the room of her husband. Her innocent satisfaction in the hope of returning to her native place, is construed by Othello into the pleasure she received from the advancement of his rival. STEEVENS.

⁴ In this exclamation Shakspeare has shown great art. Iago, in the first scene in which he endeavours to awaken his suspicion, being urged to give some evident proof of the guilt of Cassio and Desdemona, tells him it were impossible to have ocular demonstration of it, though they should be “as prime as goats, as hot as monkies.”—These words we may suppose, still ring in the ears of Othello, who being now fully convinced of his wife's infidelity, rushes out with this emphatic exclamation:—Iago's words were but too true; now indeed I am convinced that they are as hot as “goats and monkies. MALONE.

Though the words of Othello, cited by Mr. Malone, could not have escaped the deliberate reader's memory, a reference to a distant scene, but ill agrees with the infuriation of Othello's mind. His fancy, haunted by still growing images of lewdness, would scarce have expressed its feelings in recollected phraseology. STEEVENS.

⁵ To graze is not merely to touch superficially, [as Dr. Warburton has stated] but to strike not directly, not so as to bury the body of the thing striking in the matter struck.

Theobald trifles, as is usual. *Accident* and *chance* may admit a subtle distinction; *accident* may be considered as the *act*, and *chance* as the *power* or agency of fortune; as, *It was by chance that this accident befel me.* At last if we suppose all corrupt that is inaccurate, there will be no end of emendation. JOHNSON.

I do not see the least ground for supposing any corruption in this passage. As *pierce* relates to *the dart of chance*, so *graze* is referred to *the shot of accident.* The expression is still used; we still say—he was grazed by a bullet. MALONE.

Iago. He is that he is ; I may not breathe my censure,
What he might be,—if, what he might, he is not,—
I would to heaven, he were.

Lod. What, strike his wife!

Iago. 'Faith, that was not so well ; Yet 'would I knew,
That stroke would prove the worst.

Lod. Is it his use?
Or did the letters work upon his blood,
And new-create this fault?

Iago. Alas, alas!
It is not honesty in me, to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him ;
And his own courses will denote him so,
That I may save my speech : Do but go after,
And mark how he continues.

Lod. I am sorry, that I am deceiv'd in him. [Exeunt]

SCENE II.

*A Room in the Castle.**

Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA.

Oth. You have seen nothing then ?

Emil. Nor ever heard ; nor ever did suspect.

Oth.

* There are great difficulties in ascertaining the place of this scene. Near the close of it, Iago says to Desdemona, "Go in, and weep not," which would lead us to place it in the court before Othello's castle. These words may indeed be explained to mean, "Go into the supper-room." (though I do not think that the meaning) : but immediately afterwards Roderigo enters, and converses with Iago, which decisively ascertains the scene not to be in Othello's house : for Roderigo, who had given the first intelligence to Brabantio, of his daughter's flight, and had shortly afterwards drawn his sword on Othello and his partisans, certainly would not take the liberty of walking into his house at pleasure.

On the other hand, what Othello says early in the scene to Emilia, "Leave procreants alone, and shut the door ;" and his subsequent address to her as he goes out, as decisively point out a room in Othello's castle as the place of the scene ; and compel us to place the several interlocutors there, however inconsistent with Roderigo's entry, and Iago's address to Desdemona.

The

Oth. Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

Emil. But then I saw no harm ; and then I heard
Each syllable, that breath made up between them.

Oth. What, did they never whisper ?

Emil. Never, my lord.

Oth. Nor send you out o'the way ?

Emil. Never.

Oth. To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor no-
thing ?

Emil. Never, my lord.

Oth. That's strange.

Emil. I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake : if you think other,
Remove your thought ; it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch hath put this in your head,
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse !
For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,
There's no man happy ; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander.

Oth. Bid her come hither ;—go.—

[*Exit EMILIA.*]

She says enough ;—yet she's a simple bawd,
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,
A closet-lock-and-key of villainous secrets :
And yet she'll kneel, and pray ; I have seen her do't.

Re-enter EMILIA, with DESDEMONA.

Des. My lord, what is your will ?

Oth. Pray, chuck, come hither.

Des. What is your pleasure ?

Oth. Let me see your eyes ;

Look in my face.

Des. What horrible fancy's this ?

Oth. Some of your function mistrefs ;

[*To EMILIA.*]

Leave procreants alone, and shut the door ;

Cough,

The truth is, that our poet and his audience, in this instance as in
many other, were content, from want of scenery, to consider the very
same spot, at one and the same time, as the outside and inside of a house.

MALONE.

Cough, or cry—hem, if any body come :
Your mystery, your mystery ;—nay, despatch.

[Exit EMILIA.]

Des. Upon my knees, what doth your speech import ?
I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words.

Oth. Why, what art thou ?

Des. Your wife, my lord ; your true
And loyal wife.

Oth. Come, swear it, damn thyself ;
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves
Should fear to seize thee ; therefore be double damn'd,
Swear—thou art honest.

Des. Heaven doth truly know it.

Oth. Heaven truly knows, that thou art false as hell.

Des. To whom, my lord ? With whom ? How am I
false ?

Oth. O Desdemona !—away ! away ! away !

Des. Alas, the heavy day !—Why do you weep ?
Am I the occasion of these tears, my lord ?

If, haply, you my father do suspect,
An instrument of this your calling back,
Lay not your blame on me ; if you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.

Oth. Had it pleas'd heaven
To try me with affliction ; had he rain'd
All kinds of sores, and shames, on my bare head ;
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips ;
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes ;
I should have found in some part of my soul
A drop of patience : but (alas !) to make me
A fixed figure, for the time of scorn.²

To

² The reading of both the eldest quartos and the folio is,

“ ——— for the time of scorn.”

Mr. Rowe reads—*band* of scorn ; and succeeding editors have silently followed him.

I would (though in opposition to so many great authorities in favour of the change) continue to read with the old copy :

“ ——— the time of scorn.”

To point his slow unmoving finger at;—

O! O!

Yet could I bear that too; well, very well:

But there, where I have garner'd up my heart;³

Where either I must live, or bear no life;

The fountain from the which my current runs,

Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!

Or keep it as a cistern, for foul toads

To knot and gender in!—turn thy complexion there!

Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin;

Ay, there, look grim as hell!⁴

Des. I hope, my noble lord esteems me honest.

Oth. O, ay; as summer flies are in the shambles,

That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,⁵

Who

We call the *hour in which we are to die*, the *hour of death*—the time when we are to be judged—the *day of judgement*—the instant when we suffer calamity—the *moment of evil*; and why may we not distinguish the time which brings contempt along with it, by the title of the *time of scorn*?

Othello takes his idea from a clock. *To make me (says he) a fixed figure (on the dial of the world) for the hour of scorn to point and make a full stop at!* STEEVENS.

In the clocks of the last age there was, I think, in the middle of the dial-plate a figure of time, which, I believe, was in our poet's thoughts, when he wrote the passage in the text.

The *finger* of the dial was the technical phrase. MALONE.

Perhaps we should read — *slowly moving finger at*. I should wish to reject the present reading, for even the word *slow* implies some degree of motion, though that motion may not be perceptible to the eye. The *time of scorn* is a strange expression, to which, I cannot reconcile myself; I have no doubt but it is erroneous, and wish we had authority to read — *hand of scorn*, instead of *time*. M. MASON.

Whatever were the precise instance of disgrace to which Othello alluded, the text in its present state, is perfectly intelligible; and, therefore, should be preserved from capricious alterations. HENLEY.

³ That is, *treasured up*; the *garner* and the *fountain* are improperly conjoined. JOHNSON.

⁴ At such an object do thou, *patience*, thyself *change colour*; at this do thou, even thou, *rosy cherub* as thou art, *look as grim as hell*. The old editions and the new have it:

“ I here look grim as hell.”

I was written for *ay*, and not since corrected. JOHNSON.

⁵ Dr. Johnson has, on this occasion, been unjustly censured for having *stified*

Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet,
That the sense aches at thee,—'Would, thou had'st ne'er
been born!

Des. Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

Oth. Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
Made to write whore upon? What committed!
Committed! ⁶—O thou publick commoner!
I should make very forges of my cheeks,
That would to cinders burn up modesty,
Did I but speak thy deeds.—What committed!
Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;
The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,
Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,
And will not hear it: What committed!—
Impudent strumpet!

Des. By heaven, you do me wrong.

Oth. Are not you a strumpet?

Des. No, as I am a christian;
If to preserve this vessel for my lord,⁷
From any other foul unlawful touch,
Be—not to be a strumpet, I am none.

Oth. What, not a whore?

Des. No, as I shall be fav'd.

Oth. Is it possible?

Des. O, heaven forgive us!

Oth. I cry you mercy, then;
I took you for that cunning whore of Venice,
That married with Othello.—You, mistress,

Re-enter

stified difficulties where he could not remove them. I would therefore observe, that Othello's speech is printed word for word from the folio edition, though the quarto reads:

“O thou *black* weed!”

Had this epithet, *black*, been admitted, there would still have remained an incomplete verse in the speech: no additional beauty would have been introduced; but instead of it, a paltry antithesis between the words *black* and *fair*. STEEVENS.

⁶ This word in Shakspeare's time, beside its general signification, seems to have been applied particularly to unlawful acts of love.—Hence perhaps it is so often repeated by Othello. MALONE.

⁷ This expression, as well as many others, our author has borrowed from the sacred writings: “—— to possess his *vessel* in sanctification,”—*1 Thess.* iv. 4. MALONE.

Re-enter EMILIA.

That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,
And keep the gate of hell; You! you! ay, you!
We have done our course; there's money for your pains;
I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel. *[Exit.*

Emil. Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?—

How do you, madam? how do you, my good lady?

Des. Faith, half asleep.

Emil. Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

Des. With who?

Emil. Why, with my lord, madam.

Des. Who is thy lord?

Emil. He that is yours, sweet lady.

Des. I have none: Do not talk to me, Emilia;
I cannot weep; nor answer have I none,
But what should go by water. Pr'ythee, to-night
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets,—remember;—
And call thy husband hither.

Emil. Here is a change, indeed!

[Exit.

Des. 'Tis meet I should be us'd so, very meet.
How have I been behav'd, that he might stick
The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse?⁸

Re-enter EMILIA, with IAGO.

Iago. What is your pleasure, madam? How is it with you?

Des. I cannot tell. Those, that do teach young babes,
Do it with gentle means, and easy tasks:
He might have chid me so; for, in good faith,
I am a child to chiding.

Iago. What's the matter, lady?

Emil. Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhor'd her,
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear.

Des. Am I that name, Iago?

Iago. What name, fair lady?

Des.

⁸ This is the reading of the quarto, 1622, which Dr. Johnson thought preferable to the reading of the folio—*on my least misuse.* MALONE.

Des. Such as, she says, my lord did say I was.

Emil. He call'd her, whore; a beggar, in his drink,
Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.⁹

Iago. Why did he so?

Des. I do not know; I am sure, I am none such.

Iago. Do not weep, do not weep; Alas, the day!

Emil. Has she forsook so many noble matches,
Her father, and her country, and her friends,
To be call'd—whore? would it not make one weep?

Des. It is my wretched fortune.

Iago.

Beshrew him for it!

How comes this trick upon him?

Des.

Nay, heaven doth know.

Emil. I will be hang'd, if some eternal villain,
Some busy and insinuating rogue,
Some cogging cozening slave, to get some office,
Have not devis'd this slander; I'll be hang'd else.

Iago. Fye, there is no such man; it is impossible.

Des. If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

Emil. A halter pardon him! and hell gnaw his bones!
Why should he call her, whore? who keeps her company?
What place? what time? what form? what likelihood?
The Moor's abus'd by some most villainous knave,
Some base notorious² knave, some scurvy fellow:—
O, heaven, that such companions³ thou'dst unfold;
And put in every honest hand a whip,

To

⁹ *Callet* is a lewd woman; so called (says Dr. Grey) from the French *calote*, which was a sort of head-dress worn by country girls. This head-dress is mentioned by Ben Jonson in his *Magnetick Lady*:

“The wearing the *callot*, the politic hood.” STEEVENS.

This word is of great antiquity in the English language. Chaucer has it in his *Remedy of Love*. PERCY.

I meet with this word in *The Translation of Ariosto*, 1591:

“And thus this old ill-favour'd spiteful *callet*—.”

Harrington, in a note on that line, says that “*callet* is a nick-name used to a woman,” and that “in Irish it signifies a *witch*.”

I have no faith in Dr. Grey's etymology of this word, *Calote* is a coil or light cap, worn by others beside country girls. MALONE.

² For *gross*, not in its proper meaning for *known*. JOHNSON.

³ Dol Tearsheet also says to Pistol:—“I scorn you, scurvy *companion*.”

STEEVENS.

Companion,

To lash the rascal & naked through the world,
Even from the east to the west!

Iago. Speak within door.⁵

Emil. O, fye upon him! some such squire he was,
That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,⁶
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

Iago. You are a fool; go to.

Des. O good Iago,

What shall I do to win my lord again?

Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,

I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:—

If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,

Either in discourse of thought, or actual deed;⁷

Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,

Delighted them in any other form;

Or that I do not yet, and ever did,

And ever will,—though he do shake me off

To beggarly divorcement,—love him dearly,

Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much;

And his unkindness may defeat my life,

But never taint my love. I cannot say, whore;

It does abhor me, now I speak the word;

To do the act that might the addition earn,

Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

Iago. I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humour;

The business of the state does him offence,

And he does chide with you.⁸

Des.

Companion, in the time of Shakspeare, was used as a word of contempt, in the same sense as *fellow* is at this day.

So, in *The Widow's Tears*, by Chapman, 1612: "How now, base companion?" MALONE.

4 Emilia first wishes that *all* base fellows were detected, and then that heaven would put a whip in every honest hand to punish in a signal manner that villainous knave, particularly in her thoughts, who had abused the too credulous Moor. MALONE.

5 Do not clamour so as to be heard beyond the house. JOHNSON.

6 That is, *inside out*. JOHNSON.

7 The three ways of committing sin mentioned in the Catholick catechisms are—in *thought, word, and deed*. C.

The same words remain in our Liturgy. STEEVENS.

8 To *chide with* was the phraseology of the time. We have, I think, the same phrase in one of our poet's *Sonnets*. MALONE.

Des. If 'twere no other,—

Iago. It is but so, I warrant you. [*Trumpets.*
Hark, how these instruments summon to supper!
And the great messengers of Venice stay:
Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.

[*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA.*

Enter RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo?

Rod. I do not find, that thou deal'st justly with me.

Iago. What in the contrary?

Rod. Every day thou doff'st me with some device, Iago; and rather (as it seems to me now,) keep'st from me all conveniency, than suppliest me with the least advantage of hope. I will indeed, no longer endure it: Nor am I yet persuaded, to put up in peace what already I have foolishly suffer'd.

Iago. Will you hear me, Roderigo?

Rod. 'Faith, I have heard too much: for your words, and performances, are no kin together.

Iago. You charge me most unjustly.

Rod. With nought but truth. I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me, to deliver to Desdemona, would half have corrupted a votarist: You have told me—she has received them, and return'd me expectations and comforts of sudden respect and acquittance;⁹ but I find none.

Iago. Well; go to; very well.

Rod. Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 'tis not very well: By this hand, I say, it is very scurvy; and begin to find myself fobb'd in it.

Iago. Very well.

Rod. I tell you, 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona: If she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit, and repent my unlawful sollicitation; if not, assure yourself, I will seek satisfaction of you.

Iago. You have said now.

Rod.

⁹ This is the reading of the original quarto, 1622. The folio reads—*and acquaintance.*

Acquittance is requital. MALONE.

Rod. Ay, and I have said nothing, but what I protest intendment of doing.

Iago. Why, now I see there's mettle in thee; and even, from this instant, do build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo: Thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

Rod. It hath not appear'd.

Iago. I grant, indeed, it hath not appear'd; and your suspicion is not without wit and judgement.² But, Roderigo, if thou hast that within thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever,—I mean, purpose, courage, and valour,—this night show it: if thou the next night following enjoyest not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery, and devise engines for my life.³

Rod. Well, what is it? is it within reason, and compass?

Iago. Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice, to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

Rod. Is that true? why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

Iago. O, no; he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be linger'd here by some accident; wherein none can be so determinate, as the removing of Cassio.

Rod. How do you mean—removing of him?

Iago. Why, by making him incapable of Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

Rod. And that you would have me do?

Iago. Ay; if you dare do yourself a profit, and a right. He sups to-night with a harlot,⁴ and thither will I go to him;—he knows not yet of his honourable fortune: if you will

² Shakspeare knew well, that most men like to be flattered on account of those endowments in which they are most deficient. Hence Iago's compliment to this *snipe* on his sagacity and shrewdness. MALONE.

³ To *devise engines*, seems to mean, to contrive racks, tortures, &c.

⁴ The folio reads—a *barlotry*, which may be right. Our author has the expression—"a peevish self-will'd *barlotry*," in two plays.

RITSON.

will watch his going thence, (which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one,) you may take him at your pleasure; I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death, that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time,⁵ and the night grows to waste:⁶ about it.

Rod. I will hear further reason for this.

Iago. And you shall be satisfied.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Another Room in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Attendants.

Lod. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

Oth. O, pardon me; 'twill do me good to walk.

Lod. Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

Des. Your honour is most welcome.

Oth. Will you walk, sir?—

O,—Desdemona,—

Des. My lord?

Oth. Get you to bed on the instant; I will be return'd forthwith: dismiss your attendant there; look, it be done.

Des. I will, my lord.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and Attendants.*
Emil.]

⁵ I believe we should read:

It is now high supper-time,— M. MASON.

The old reading is the true one. There is no phrase more common than—"high time to go to bed—to get up," &c. *High time is full, complete time.*

Clarendon is frequent in his use of this expression. STEEVENS.

⁶ I suppose Iago means to say, that it is near midnight. Perhaps we ought to print—*waist*.

The words, however, may only mean—the night is wasting apace.

MALONE.

The last is certainly the true explanation. STEEVENS.

Emil. How goes it now? he looks gentler than he did.

Des. He says, he will return incontinent:
He hath commanded me to go to bed,
And bade me to dismiss you.

Emil. Dismiss me!

Des. It was his bidding; therefore, good Emilia,
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu:
We must not now displease him.

Emil. I would, you had never seen him!

Des. So would not I; my love doth so approve him,
That even his stubbornness, his checks, and frowns,—
Pr'ythee, unpin me,—have grace and favour in them.

Emil. I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

Des. All's one:—Good father! how foolish are our
minds!—

If I do die before thee, pr'ythee, shroud me
In one of those same sheets.

Emil. Come, come, you talk.

Des. My mother had a maid, call'd—Barbara;
She was in love; and he, she lov'd, prov'd mad,⁷
And did forsake her: she had a song of—willow,
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,
And she died singing it: That song, to-night,
Will not go from my mind; I have much to do,
But to go hang my head⁸ all at one side,

And

⁷ I believe that *mad* only signifies *wild, frantic, uncertain*. JOHNSON.
Mad, in the present instance, ought to mean—*inconstant*. RITSON.
We still call a wild giddy girl a *mad-cap*. STEEVENS.

⁸ *I have much ado to do any thing but hang my head.* We might read:
Not to hang my head.

This is perhaps the only insertion made in the latter editions which has improved the play. The rest seem to have been added for the sake of amplification, or of ornament. When the imagination had subsided, and the mind was no longer agitated by the horror of the action, it became at leisure to look round for specious additions. This addition is natural. Desdemona can at first hardly forbear to sing the song; she endeavours to change her train of thoughts, but her imagination at last prevails, and she sings it. JOHNSON.

From *I have much to do*, to *Nay, that's not next*, was inserted after the first edition, as was likewise the remaining part of the song.

STEEVENS.

And sing it like poor Barbara. Pr'ythee, despatch.

Emil. Shall I go fetch your night-gown?

Des.

No, unpin me here.—

This Lodovico is a proper man.

Emil. A very handsome man.

Des.

And he speaks well.

Emil. I know a lady in Venice, who would have walk'd barefoot to Palestine, for a touch of his nether lip.

Des. *The poor soul⁹ sat sighing² by a sycamore tree,*

Sing all a green willow;

[Singing.

Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,

Sing willow, willow, willow:

The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans;

Sing willow, &c.

Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones;

Lay by these:

Sing willow, willow, willow;

Pr'ythee, hie thee; he'll come anon.—

Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

2.

Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve,—

Nay, that's not next—Hark! who is it that knocks?

Emil. It is the wind.

Des. *I call'd my love, false love;³ but what said he then?*

Sing willow, &c.

If I court no women, you'll couch with no men.

So,

⁹ This song, in two parts, is printed in a late collection of old ballads; the lines preserved here differ somewhat from the copy discovered by the ingenious collector. JOHNSON.

² The folio reads —*singing*. The passage, as has been already observed, is not in the original copy printed in 1622. The reading of the text is taken from a quarto of no authority printed in 1630. *Sighing*, as Mr. Steevens has observed, is also the reading in the black-letter copy of this ballad in the Pepys Collection, which Dr. Percy followed. MALONE.

³ This couplet is not in the ballad, which is the complaint, not of a woman forsaken, but of a man rejected. These lines were properly added when it was accommodated to a woman. JOHNSON.

So, get thee gone ; good night. Mine eyes do itch ;
Doth that bode weeping ?

Emil. 'Tis neither here nor there.

Des. I have heard it said so.—O, these men, these men!—

Dost thou in conscience think,—tell me, Emilia,—
That there be women do abuse their husbands
In such gross kind ?

Emil. There be some such, no question.

Des. Would'st thou do such a deed for all the world ?

Emil. Why, would not you ?

Des. No, by this heavenly light !

Emil. Nor I neither by this heavenly light ;
I might do't as well i'the dark.

Des. Would'st thou do such a deed for all the world ?

Emil. The world is a huge thing : 'Tis a great price
For a small vice.

Des. Good troth, I think thou would'st not.

Emil. By my troth, I think I should ; and undo't, when
I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a
joint-ring ; ⁴ nor for measures of lawn ; nor gowns, petti-
coats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition : but, for the
whole world,—Why, who would not make her husband a
cuckold, to make him a monarch ? I should venture pur-
gatory for't.

Des. Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong for the
whole world.

Emil. Why, the wrong is but a wrong i'the world ; and,
having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your own
world, and you might quickly make it right.

Des. I do not think, there is any such woman.

Emil. Yes, a dozen ; and as many
To the vantage,⁵ as would store the world they play'd
for.

But, I do think, it is their husbands' faults,
If wives do fall : Say, that they slack their duties,
And pour our treasures into foreign laps ;

Or

⁴ Anciently a common token among lovers. STEEVENS.

⁵ i. e. to boot, over and above. STEEVENS.

Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
 Throwing restraint upon us ; or, say, they strike us,
 Or scant our former having ⁶ in despite ;
 Why, we have galls ; and, though we have some grace,
 Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know,
 Their wives have sense like them ; ⁷ they see, and smell,
 And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
 As husbands have. What is it that they do,
 When they change us for others ? Is it sport ?
 I think it is ; And doth affection breed it ?
 I think, it doth ; Is't frailty, that thus errs ?
 It is so too : And have not we affections ?
 Desires for sport ? and frailty, as men have ?
 Then, let them use us well : else, let them know,
 The ills we do, their ills instruct us to.

Des. Good night, good night : Heaven me such usage⁸
 send,

Not to pick bad from bad ; but, by bad, mend ! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Street.

Enter IAGO and RODERIGO.

Iago. Here, stand behind this bulk ; straight will he come :
 Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home ;
 Quick, quick ; fear nothing ; I'll be at thy elbow :
 It makes us, or it mars us ; think on that,
 And fix most firm thy resolution.

Rod. Be near at hand ; I may miscarry in't.

Iago. Here, at thy hand ; be bold, and take thy sword.

[*Retires to a little distance.*

Rod.

⁶ Our former allowance of expence. JOHNSON.

⁷ — have sense like them :] Sense is used here, as in *Hamlet*, for sensation, or sensual appetite. MALONE.

⁸ Such *uses* is the reading of the folio, and of the subsequent editions ; but the old quarto has, — such *usage* send. *Usage* is an old word for *custom*, and, I think, better than *uses*. JOHNSON.

Rod. I have no great devotion to the deed ;
And yet he has given me satisfying reasons :—
'Tis but a man gone :—forth, my sword ; he dies.

[*Goes to his stand.*]

Iago. I have rubb'd this young quat⁹ almost to the sense,
And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio,
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
Every way makes my gain :² Live Roderigo,
He calls me to a restitution large
Of gold, and jewels, that I bobb'd³ from him,
As gifts to Desdemona ;
It must not be : if Cassio do remain,
He hath a daily beauty in his life,
That makes me ugly ; and, besides, the Moor
May unfold me to him ; there stand I in much peril :
No, he must die :—But so, I hear him coming.

Enter CASSIO.

Rod. I know his gait, 'tis he ;—Villain, thou diest.

[*Rushes from his post, and makes a pass at CASSIO.*]

Cas. That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,
But that my coat is better than thou think'st ;
I will make proof of thine.

[*Draws, and wounds RODERIGO.*]

Rod.

⁹ This is a passage much controverted among the editors. Sir T. Hanmer reads *quab*, a *gudgeon* ; not that a *gudgeon* can be rubbed to much sense, but that a man grossly deceived is often called a *gudgeon*. Mr. Upton reads—*quail*, which he proves, by much learning, to be a very cholerick bird. Dr. Warburton retains *gnat*, which is found in the early quarto. Theobald would introduce *knot*, a small bird of that name. I have followed the text of the folio, and third and fourth quartos.

A *quat* in the midland counties is a *pimple*, which by rubbing is made to smart, or is rubbed to sense. Roderigo is called a *quat* by the same mode of speech, as a low fellow is now termed in low language a *scab*. To rub to the sense, is to rub to the quick. JOHNSON.

² The quartos read—my game. STEEVENS.

³ That I fool'd him out of. A *bob* formerly signified a mock, or jeer. MALONE.

To *bob* for fish is likewise a technical term among those who delight in angling. STEEVENS.

Rod. O, I am slain!

[IAGO rushes from his post, cuts CASSIO behind in the leg,⁴ and exit.

Cas. I am maim'd for ever:—Help, ho! murder! murder!
[Falk.

Enter OTHELLO, at a distance.

Oth. The voice of Cassio:—Iago keeps his word.

Rod. O, villain that I am!

Oth. Hark! 'tis even so.

Cas. O, help! ho! light! a surgeon!

Oth. 'Tis he;—O brave Iago, honest, and just,
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!
Thou teachest me,—Minion, your dear lies dead,
And your fate hies apace:—Strumpet, I come:
Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted;
Thy bed, lust-stain'd, shall with lust's blood be spotted.

[Exit OTHELLO.

Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO, at a distance.

Cas. What, ho! no watch? no passage?⁵ murder!
murder!

Gra. 'Tis some mischance; the cry is very direful.

Cas. O, help!

Lod. Hark!

Rod. O wretched villain!

Lod. Two or three groans;—it is a heavy night:⁶
These may be counterfeits; let's think't unsafe
To come in to the cry, without more help.

Rod. No body come? then shall I bleed to death.

Enter IAGO, with a light.

Lod. Hark!

Gra. Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and
weapons.

Iago.

⁴ Iago maims Cassio in the leg, in consequence of what he had just heard him say, from which he supposed that his body was defended by some secret armour. MALONE.

⁵ No passengers? nobody going by? JOHNSON.

⁶ A thick cloudy night, in which an ambush may be commodiously laid.
JOHNSON.

Iago. Who's there? whose noise is this, that cries on murder?

Lod. We do not know.

Iago. Did you not hear a cry?

Cas. Here, here; for heaven's sake, help me.

Iago. What's the matter?

Gra. This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

Lod. The same, indeed; a very valiant fellow.

Iago. What are you here, that cry so grievously?

Cas. Iago? O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains!
Give me some help.

Iago. O me, lieutenant! what villains have done this?

Cas. I think, that one of them is hereabout,
And cannot make away.

Iago. O treacherous villains!—
What are you there? come in, and give some help.

[To LODOVICO and GRATIANO,

Rod. O, help me here!

Cas. That's one of them.

Iago. O murderous slave! O villain!
[IAGO stabs RODERIGO.

Rod. O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog!—
O! O! O!

Iago. Kill men i'the dark!—Where be these bloody
thieves?—

How silent is this town!—Ho! murder! murder!

What may you be? are you of good, or evil?

Lod. As you shall prove us, praise us.

Iago. Signior Lodovico?

Lod. He, sir.

Iago. I cry you mercy; Here's Cassio hurt
By villains.

Gra. Cassio?

Iago. How is it, brother?

Cas. My leg is cut in two.

Iago. Marry, heaven forbid!—
Light, gentlemen; I'll bind it with my shirt.

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. What is the matter, ho? who is't that cry'd?

Iago. Who is't that cry'd?

Bian. O my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio!

O Cassio! Cassio! Cassio!

Iago. O notable strumpet!—Cassio, may you suspect
Who they should be, that have thus mangled you?

Cas. No.

Gra. I am sorry, to find you thus: I have been to seek
you.

Iago. Lend me a garter: So.—O, for a chair,
To bear him easily hence!

Bian. Alas, he faints:—O Cassio! Cassio! Cassio!

Iago. Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash
To be a party in this injury.—

Patience a while, good Cassio.—Come, come;

Lend me a light.—Know we this face, or no?

Alas! my friend, and my dear countryman,⁷

Roderigo? no:—Yes, sure;—O heaven! Roderigo.

Gra. What, of Venice?

Iago. Even he, sir; did you know him?

Gra. Know him? ay.

Iago. Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon;
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,
That so neglected you.

Gra. I am glad to see you.

Iago. How do you, Cassio?—O, a chair, a chair!

Gra. Roderigo!

Iago. He, he, 'tis he:—O, that's well said;—the chair:—

[A chair brought in.]

Some good man bear him carefully from hence;

I'll fetch the general's surgeon.—For you, mistress,

[To BIANCA.]

Save you your labour.—He that lies slain here, Cassio,

Was my dear friend: What malice was between you?

Cas. None in the world; nor do I know the man.

Iago.

⁷ This passage incontestably proves that Iago was meant for a Venetian.

Iago. [*To BIAN.*] What, look you pale?—O, bear him out o'the air.— [*CASSIO and ROD. are borne off.*]
 Stay you, good gentlemen :⁸—Look you pale, mistress?
 Do you perceive the gaftness of her eye?—
 Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon :—
 Behold her well ; I pray you, look upon her ;
 Do you see, gentlemen ? nay, guiltiness will speak,
 Though tongues were out of use.

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. 'Las, what's the matter ; what's the matter husband ?

Iago. Cassio hath here been set on in the dark,
 By Roderigo, and fellows that are scap'd ;
 He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

Emil. Alas, good gentleman ! alas, good Cassio !

Iago. This is the fruit of whoring.—Pr'ythee, Emilia,
 Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night :—
 What, do you shake at that ?

Bian. He supp'd at my house ; but I therefore shake not.

Iago. O, did he so ? I charge you, go with me.

Emil. Fye, fye upon thee, strumpet !

Bian. I am no strumpet ; but of life as honest,
 As you that thus abuse me.

Emil. As I ? foh ! fye upon thee !

Iago. Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dress'd :—
 Come,

⁸ Thus the folio. The quarto reads—*gentlewoman.* STEEVENS.

That the original is the true reading, may be collected from the situation and feelings of the parties on the scene. No reason can be assigned why *Lodovico* and *Gratiano* should immediately quit the spot where they now are, before they had heard from *Iago* further particulars of the attack on Cassio, merely because Cassio was borne off : whereas, on the other hand, his mistress, Bianca, who has been officiously offering him assistance, would naturally endeavour to accompany him to his lodgings.

MALONE.

There seems to me to be a very good reason assignable why these two gentlemen should immediately quit the spot on Cassio's being borne off, viz. to assist him or see him properly taken care of, rather than to stay and gratify their curiosity. Respect for the person appointed Othello's successor, if not personal regard, would, I should think, naturally have dictated such a proceeding, had they not been stopped by *Iago's* desiring them not to go. REED.

Come, mistress, you must tell us another tale.—
 Emilia, run you to the citadel,
 And tell my lord and lady what has happ'd.—
 Will you go on, I pray?—This is the night,
 That either makes me, or fordoes me quite.⁹

[*Aside.*
 [*Exeunt.*

S C E N E II.

A Bedchamber: DESDEMONA in bed asleep. A light burning.

Enter OTHELLO.

Oth. It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—
 Let me not name it² to you, you chaste stars!—
 It is the cause.—Yet I'll not shed her blood;
 Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
 And smooth as monumental alabaster. [*Takes off his sword.*
 Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.³
 Put out the light, and then put out the light: ⁴

If

⁹ To *ferdo*, is to undo, to ruin, to destroy. STEEVENS.

² The abruptness of this soliloquy makes it obscure. The meaning, I think, is this:—I am here (says Othello in his mind) overwhelmed with horror. What is the reason of this perturbation? Is it want of resolution to do justice? Is it the dread of shedding blood? No; it is not the action that shocks me, but *it is the cause, it is the cause, my soul; let me not name it to you, ye chaste stars! it is the cause.* JOHNSON.

Othello, full of horror at the cruel action which he is about to perpetrate, seems at this instant to be seeking his justification, from representing to himself *the cause*, i. e. the greatness of the provocation he had received. STEEVENS.

³ This is the second attempt of Othello to justify what he has undertaken. First he says, *It is the cause*, i. e. his own *cause*; now he is willing to suppose himself the preventer of mischief to others. STEEVENS.

⁴ It should be thus printed:

Put out the light, and then—Put out the light!

The meaning is, I will put out the light, and *then* proceed to the execution of my purpose. But the expression of *putting out the light*, bringing to mind the effects of the extinction of the light of life, he breaks short, and questions himself about the effects of this metaphorical extinction, introduced by a repetition of his first words, as much as to say,—But hold, let me first weigh the reflections which this expression so naturally excites. WARBURTON.

This

If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
 I can again thy former light restore,
 Should I repent me:—but once put out thine,
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
 I know not where is that Promethean heat,
 That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd thy
 rose,

I cannot give it vital growth again,
 It needs must wither:—I'll smell it on the tree.—

[*Kissing her.*
 O balmy

This has been considered as a very difficult line. *Fielding* makes *Betterton* and *Booth* dispute about it with the *author himself* in the other world. The punctuation recommended by Dr. Warburton, gives a spirit to it which I fear was not intended. It seems to have been only a *play upon words*. To put the light out was a phrase for to kill. In *The Maid's Tragedy*, *Melantius* says,

“ — ’Tis a justice, and a noble one,

“ To put the light out of such base offenders.” FARMER.

This is one of the passages to which I alluded in a note on *As you like it*, in which, by a modern regulation, our poet's words have obtained a meaning, which in my opinion was not in his thoughts. Mr. Upton was the first person who introduced the *conceit* in this line, which has been adopted since his book appeared, by pointing it thus:

Put out the light, and then—Put out the light! &c.

I entirely agree with Dr. Farmer, that this regulation gives a spirit to this passage that was not intended. The poet, I think, meant merely to say,—“ I will now put out the lighted taper which I hold, and then put out the light of life;” and this introduces his subsequent reflection and comparison, just as aptly, as supposing the latter words of the line to be used in the same sense as in the beginning of it, which cannot be done without destroying that equivoque and play of words of which Shakspeare was so fond.

Let the words—*put out her light*, stand for a moment in the place of—*darken her*, and then the sentence will run—*Burn out thy light, fair torch, and lend it not to put out her light, whose light is more excellent than thine*. In the very same strain, says *Othello*, “ *let me first extinguish the light I now hold, and then put out the light of life*. But how different in effect and importance are these two acts! The extinguished taper can be lighted again, but the light of life, when once extinguished, can never, alas, be relumined!

The question is not, which regulation renders the passage most elegant and spirited, but what was the poet's idea.—I believe, however, that Shakspeare wrote—and then put out *thy* light; and the reading of the original copy in a subsequent line, “ — but once put out *thine*,” seems to me to countenance this emendation. MALONE.

O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword!—One more, one more.—
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after:—One more, and this the last:
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: This sorrow's heavenly; ⁵
It strikes, where it doth love.—She wakes—

Des. Who's there? Othello?

Oth. Ay, Desdemona.

Des. Will you come to bed, my lord?

Oth. Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?

Des. Ay, my lord.

Oth. If you bethink yourself of any crime,
Unreconcil'd as yet to heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.

Des. Alas, my lord, what may you mean by that?

Oth. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No,—Heaven forefend!—I would not kill thy soul. ⁶

Des. Talk you of killing?

Oth. Ay, I do.

Des. Then, heaven
Have mercy on me!

Oth. Amen, with all my heart!

Des. If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

Oth. Humph!

Des. And yet I fear you; for you are fatal then,
When your eyes roll so: Why I should fear, I know not,
Since

⁵ This tendernefs, with which I lament the punishment which justice compels me to inflict, is a holy passion.

I wish these two lines could be honestly ejected. It is the fate of Shakspeare to counteract his own pathos. JOHNSON.

Perhaps the poet would not have retained both these images, had he published the play himself, though in the hurry of composition he threw them both upon paper. The first seems adopted from the fabulous history of the crocodile, the second from a passage in the scripture.

STEEVENS.

“Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.” M. MASON.

⁶ *Othello* appears to have been a favourite of his author; for he has bestowed on him that piety which he had refused to *Hamlet*.

STEEVENS.

Since guiltiness I know not ; but yet, I feel, I fear.⁷

Oth. Think on thy sins.

Des. They are loves I bear to you.

Oth. Ay, and for that thou diest.

Des. That death's unnatural, that kills for loving.—

Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip ?

Some bloody passion shakes your very frame :

These are portents ; but yet, I hope, I hope,

They do not point on me.

Oth. Peace, and be still !

Des. I will so : What's the matter ?

Oth. That handkerchief, which I so lov'd, and gave thee,

Thou gav'st to Cassio.

Des. No, by my life and soul ;

Send for the man, and ask him.

Oth. Sweet soul, take heed,

Take heed of perjury ; thou'rt on thy death-bed.

Des. Ay, but not yet to die.

Oth. Yes, presently :

Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin ;

For to deny each article with oath,

Cannot remove, nor choke, the strong conception,

That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

Des. Then, Lord have mercy on me !

Oth. I say, amen.

Des. And have you mercy too !—I never did

Offend you in my life ; never lov'd Cassio,

But with such general warranty of heaven

As I might love : I never gave him token.

Oth. By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in his hand.

O perjur'd woman ! thou dost stone my heart,

And mak'st me call, what I intend to do,—

A murder.

⁷ The chivalry of criticism does not, in my opinion, require us to defend the old copies (those grannams of the stage, *balba de nare locutæ*) when they so grossly offend against the laws of metre. In the earlier part of this work I have got rid of some of their deformities, but in this and a few of the latter plays I have been content with exposing them, being certain that their notoriety will hereafter prove the means of securing a privilege which, respecting the present editors, may be litigated.

A murder, which I thought a sacrifice :⁸
I saw the handkerchief.

Des. He found it then ;
I never gave it him :—Send for him hither,
And let him confess a truth.

Oth. He hath confess'd.

Des. What, my lord ?

Oth. That he hath—us'd thee.

Des. How ? unlawfully ?

Oth. Ay.

Des. He'll not say so.

Oth. No, his mouth is stopp'd ;
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for't.⁹

Des. My fear interprets then,—What, is he dead ?

Oth. Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge
Had stomach for them all.

Des. Alas ! he is betray'd, and I undone.

Oth. Out, strumpet ! Weep'st thou for him to my face ?

Des. O, banish me my lord, but kill me not.

Oth. Down, strumpet !

Des. Kill me to-morrow, let me live to-night.

Oth. Nay, if you strive,—

Des. But half an hour.

Oth. Being done,
There is no pause.

Des. But while I say one prayer.

Oth. It is too late.² [*He smothers her.*
Emil.

⁸ This line is difficult. *Thou hast harden'd my heart, and makest me kill thee with the rage of a murderer, when I thought to have sacrificed thee to justice with the calmness of a priest striking a victim.*

It must not be omitted, that one of the elder quartos reads,—*thou dost stone thy heart* ; which I suspect to be genuine. The meaning then will be,—*thou forcest me to dismiss thee from the world in the state of the murdered without preparation for death, when I intended that thy punishment should have been a sacrifice atoning for thy crime.*

I am glad that I have ended my revival of this dreadful scene. It is not to be endured. JOHNSON.

⁹ i. e. has taken measures. STEEVENS.

² After this speech of Othello, the elder quarto adds an invocation from Desdemona, consisting only of the sacred name thrice repeated. As this must be supposed to have been uttered while she is yet struggling with

Emil. [*Within.*] My lord, my lord! what ho! my lord!
my lord!

Oth. What noise is this?—Not dead! not yet quite dead?
I, that am cruel, and yet merciful;
I would not have thee linger in thy pain.—
So, so.

Emil. [*Within.*] What ho! my lord, my lord!

Oth. Who's there?

Emil. [*Within.*] O, good my lord, I would speak a word
with you.

Oth. Yes;—'tis Emilia:—by and by.—She's dead.
'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death;
The noise was high.—Ha! no more moving?
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were't good?
I think, she stirs again:—No.—What's the best?
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:—
My wife! my wife! what wife?—I have no wife:
O, insupportable! O heavy hour!
Methinks, it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon; and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.

Emil. [*Within.*] I do beseech you I may speak with you,
O, good my lord!

Oth. I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia:—
Soft,—by and by:—Let me the curtains draw.—
Where art thou? What's the matter with thee now?

[*Unlocks the door.*
Enter

with death, I think an editor may be excused from inserting such a circumstance of supererogatory horror, especially as it is found in but one of the ancient copies. STEEVENS.

This alteration was probably made in consequence of the statute of the 3d of James I. c. 21. which lays a penalty for the profane use of the name of God, &c. in stage-plays, interludes, May-games, &c. TOLLET.

The statute was necessary; for not only the ancient moralities, but the plays (those of *Chapman* in particular) abound with the most wanton and shocking repetitions of a name which never ought to be mentioned in such an irreverend manner on the stage. STEEVENS.

The alteration was undoubtedly made by the Master of the Revels.

MALONE.

3 “Filiū unicū adolescentulū habeo: ah! quid dixi habere me?
imō habui, Chreme.” *Ter. Heautont.* STEEVENS.

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. O, good my lord, yonder's foul murder done.

Oth. What? now?

Emil. But now, my lord?

Oth. It is the very error of the moon;
She comes more near the earth than she was wont;
And makes men mad.

Emil. Cassio, my lord, has kill'd a young Venetian,
Call'd Roderigo.

Oth. Roderigo kill'd!
And Cassio kill'd?

Emil. No, Cassio is not kill'd.

Oth. Not Cassio kill'd? Then murder's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

Des. O, falsely, falsely murder'd! ⁴

Emil. Alas! what cry's that?

Oth. That! what?

Emil. Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice:—
Help! help, ho! help!—O lady, speak again!
Sweet Desdemona! O, sweet mistress, speak!

Des. A guiltless death I die.

Emil. O, who hath done
This need?

Des. Nobody; I myself; farewell:
Commend me to my kind lord; O, farewell.

[*Dies.*

Oth. Why, how should she be murder'd?

Emil. Alas, who knows?

Oth. You heard her say herself, it was not I.

Emil. She said so; I must needs report the truth.

Oth.

⁴ It cannot be supposed that a person who had been effectually strangled or smothered, could speak again; for if the power of breathing returned after the instrument of suffocation was removed, no act of violence had in reality taken place by which the conclusion of life could be brought on. But such is the peculiar fate of Desdemona, that she is supposed to be smothered, revives to acquaint us that *she smothered herself*, and then dies without any ostensible cause of death. I am of opinion that some theatrical direction has been omitted. STEEVENS.

Oth. She's, like a liar, gone to burning hell ;⁵
'Twas I that kill'd her.

Emil. O, the more angel she,
And you the blacker devil !

Oth. She turn'd to folly,⁶ and she was a whore.

Emil. Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

Oth. She was false as water.⁷

Emil. Thou art rash as fire, to say
That she was false ; O, she was heavenly true !

Oth. Cassio did tup her ; ask thy husband else.
O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,
But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity ; Thy husband knew it all.

Emil. My husband ?

Oth. Thy husband.

Emil. That she was false to wedlock ?

Oth. Ay, with Cassio.

Nay, had she been true,
If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it.

Emil. My husband ?

Oth. Ay, 'twas he that told me first ;
An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.

Emil. My husband ?

Oth. What needs this iteration, woman ? I say, thy
husband.

Emil. O mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love!⁸—
My husband say, that she was false ?

Oth. He, woman ;

I say.

⁵ Here is nothing faulty in this passage, but it may be read,

She's like a liar, gone to burn in hell.

The vulgar denunciation of future vengeance is,—I think, *you'll burn in hell* for this. WHALLEY.

⁶ Folly, signifies here, as in the sacred writings, *depravity of mind.*

MALONE.

⁷ As water that will support no weight, nor keep any impression.

JOHNSON.

⁸ Villainy has taken advantage to *play upon* the weakness of a violent passion. JOHNSON.

I say, thy husband; Dost understand the word?
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

Emil. If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day! he lies to the heart;
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

Oth. Ha!

Emil. Do thy worst:
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven,
Than thou wast worthy her.

Oth. Peace, you were best.

Emil. Thou hast not half the power to do me harm,
As I have to be hurt.⁹ O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed,—
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives:—Help! help, ho! help!
The Moor has kill'd my mistress; Murder! murder!

Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, and IAGO.

Mon. What is the matter?—How now, general?

Emil. O, are you come, Iago? you have done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

Gra. What is the matter?

Emil. Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man:
He says, thou told'st him that his wife was false;
I know, thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain;
Speak, for my heart is full.

Iago. I told him what I thought; and told no more
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

Emil. But did you ever tell him, she was false?

Iago. I did.

Emil. You told a lie; an odious, damned lie;
Upon my soul, a lie; a wicked lie:—
She false with Cassio!—Did you say, with Cassio?

Iago. With Cassio, mistress; Go to, charm your tongue.²

Emil.

⁹ She means to say,—*I have in this cause power to endure more than thou hast power to inflict.* JOHNSON.

² By this expression, *Charm your tongue*, the poet meant no more than to make Iago say,—“Apply some power, strong as a *charm* would be, to your tongue; for nothing less can stop its volubility.”

Emil. I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to speak;

My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed.

All. O heavens forefend!

Emil. And your reports have set the murder on.

Oth. Nay, stare not, masters; it is true, indeed.

Gra. 'Tis a strange truth.

Mon. O monstrous act!

Emil. Villainy, villainy, villainy!—

I think upon't,—I think,—I smell't;—O villainy!

I thought so then;—I'll kill myself for grief.—

O villainy, villainy!

Iago. What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.

Emil. Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak;

'Tis proper I obey him, but not now:—

Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

Oth. O! O! O! O! [Hanging over his wife.

Emil. Nay, lay thee down, and roar;

For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent,

That e'er did lift up eye.

Oth. O, she was foul!— [Rising.

I scarce did know you, uncle: There lies your niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopp'd:
I know, this act shows horrible and grim.

Gra. Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father's dead;
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain: did he live now,
'Tis his sight would make him do a desperate turn,
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation.

Oth. 'Tis pitiful: but yet Iago knows,
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed;³ Cassio confess'd it:

And

Pliny informs us, that *favete linguis* was the constant exclamation before any religious charm was applied. From this circumstance the phrase, to charm a tongue, might have originated. STEEVENS.

³ This is another passage which seems to suppose a longer space comprised in the action of this play than the scenes include. JOHNSON.

In confirmation of Johnson's observation, that this and several other passages tend to prove that a larger space of time is comprized in the action

And she did gratify his amorous works
 With that recognizance and pledge of love
 Which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand;
 It was a handkerchief, an antique token
 My father gave my mother.

Emil. O heaven! O heavenly powers!

Iago. Come, hold your peace.

Emil. 'Twill out, 'twill out:—I hold my peace, fir? no;
 No, I will speak as liberal as the air;
 Let heaven, and men, and devils, let them all,
 All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

Iago. Be wife, and get you home.

Emil. I will not.

[*IAGO offers to stab his wife.*
Fye!

Gra.

Your sword upon a woman?

Emil. O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou
 speak'st of,

I found by fortune, and did give my husband;
 For often, with a solemn earnestness,
 (More than, indeed, belong'd to such a trifle,)
 He begg'd of me to steal it.

Iago. Villainous whore!

Emil. She give it Cassio! no, alas; I found it,
 And I did give't my husband.

Iago. Filth, thou liest.

Emil. By heaven, I do not; I do not, gentlemen:
 O murd'rous coxcomb! what should such a fool
 Do with so good a wife?

[*IAGO stabs EMILIA, then runs out.*

Oth. Are there no stones in heaven,

But what serve for the thunder?⁴—Precious villain!

Gra.

action of this play than the scenes include, we may cite that in which
 Emilia says, "That her husband had a hundred times woo'd her to steal
 Desdemona's handkerchief." M. MASON.

⁴ Othello does not demand a thunderbolt for Iago. He only asks, if
 there are no lesser degrees of chastisement more proportioned to the guilt
 of mortals, ready to drop down on such villains as Iago, though Omni-
 potence withholds its thunder, as too noble an instrument for the punish-
 ment of crimes like his?

Gra. The woman falls; sure, he has kill'd his wife.

Emil. Ay, ay; O, lay me by my mistress' side!

Gra. He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.

Mon. 'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,
Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:

Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,
But kill him rather; I'll after that same villain,
For 'tis a damned slave.

[*Exeunt* MONTANO and GRATIANO.

Oth. I am not valiant neither,
But every puny whipster gets my sword:—
But why should honour outlive honesty?
Let it go all.

Emil. What did thy song bode, lady?
Hark, can'st thou hear me? I will play the swan,
And die in musick;—*Willow, willow, willow.*—
Moor, she was chaste; she lov'd thee, cruel Moor:
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;
So speaking as I think, I die,—I die.

[*Dies.*

Oth. I have another weapon in this chamber,
It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper;⁵

O, here

Shakspeare, might however mean, does heaven reserve its thunder only to make a noise? has it no implements of mischief to punish as well as terrify? STEEVENS.

Steevens's last explanation of this passage appears to be just, his first was unnatural. We cannot suppose that Othello in the paroxysm of resentment, agitation, and despair, should think any crimes more heinous than that of Iago.—It is difficult indeed to conceive a crime that demanded a heavier vengeance. M. MASON.

The meaning, I think, is,—Has not Heaven one supernumerary bolt, to hurl directly at the head of this atrocious villain? Must all the stores of its arsenal be reserved for common and ordinary thunder, which, though sometimes destructive, is in the usual course of nature not specifically pointed at a particular object? MALONE.

⁵ In the first edition it is—*Isebrooke's temper*. Thence corrupted to—*Ice-brook's*. *Ebro's temper*: the waters of that river of Spain are particularly famous for tempering of steel. The finest arms in the world, the Catalonian fuses. POPE.

I believe the old reading changed to *ice-brook* is right. Steel is hardened by being put red-hot into very cold water. JOHNSON.

I incline to read:

It is a sword of Spain, 'tis ebroes temper.

If

O, here it is:—Uncle, I must come forth.

Gra. [*Within.*] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear;
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

Oth. Look in upon me then, and speak with me,
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Re-enter GRATIANO.

Gra. What is the matter?

Oth. Behold! I have a weapon

A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's thigh: I have seen the day,
That, with this little arm, and this good sword,
I have made my way through more impediments
Than twenty times your stop:—But, O vain boast!
Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.—
Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
And very sea-mark of my utmost fail.
Do you go back dismay'd? 'tis a lost fear;
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires;—Where should Othello go?—
Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!⁶
Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl?
Even like thy chastity.—
O cursed, cursed slave!—Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!

Wash

If we suppose that the words [*'tis ebroes*] were huddled together either in transcribing or composing, thus, [*tisebroes*] the compositor in running it over with his eye, might (to make it sense as he thought) add a couple of letters and divide the words thus [*tb'isebroles*] which is nearly as it stands in the old quarto.

I doubt whether *ice-brooks* are usual in the climate of Spain.

BLACKSTONE.

⁶ *Wench* originally signified only a young woman.

The word is used without any dishonourable meaning in the Bible:
“Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel; (for they might not be seen to come into the city:) and a *wench* went and told them; and they went and told king David.” 2 Sam. xvii. 17. STEEVENS.

Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!

O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead?

Dead? O! O! O!

Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO, *carried in a chair,*
and Officers, with IAGO, *prisoner.*

Lod. Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

Oth. That's he, that was Othello; here I am.

Lod. Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.

Oth. I look down towards his feet;⁷—but that's a fable:
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

[OTHELLO wounds IAGO.

Lod. Wrench his sword from him.

Iago. I bleed, sir; but not kill'd.

Oth. I am not sorry neither; I'd have thee live;
For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

Lod. O thou Othello, that wast once so good,
Fall'n in the practice⁸ of a cursed slave,
What shall be said to thee?

Oth. Why, any thing:
An honourable murderer, if you will;
For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.

Lod. This wretch hath part confess'd his villainy:
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

Oth. Ay.

Cas. Dear general, I never gave you cause.⁹

Oth. I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil,
Why he hath thus ensnar'd my soul and body?

Iago. Demand me nothing: What you know, you
know:

From this time forth I never will speak word.

Lod. What? not to pray?

Gra.

⁷ To see if, according to the common opinion, his feet be cloven.

JOHNSON.

⁸ In the *snare*, by the *stratagem*. JOHNSON.

⁹ Our poet, probably without knowing it, has used the words of *The Spanish Tragedy*, 1605:

“Hieronymo, I never gave thee cause?” MALONE.

Gra. Torments will ope your lips.

Oth. Well, thou dost best.

Lod. Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,
Which, as I think, you know not: Here is a letter,
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo;
And here, another: the one of them imports
The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.

Oth. O villain!

Cas. Most heathenish, and most gross!²

Lod. Now here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain;
But that, belike, Iago in the interim³
Came in and satisfied him.

Oth. O the pernicious caitiff!—
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's?

Cas. I found it in my chamber:
And he himself confess'd, but even now,
That there he dropp'd it, for a special purpose,
Which wrought to his desire.

Oth. O fool! fool! fool!

Cas. There is, besides, in Roderigo's letter,—
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came
That I was cast: And even but now he spake,
After long seeming dead,—Iago hurt him,
Iago set him on.

Lod. You must forsake this room, and go with us;
Your power and your command is taken off,
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,—
If there be any cunning cruelty,
That can torment him much, and hold him long,
It shall be his: You shall close prisoner rest,

Till

² Read, for the sake of both sense and metre:

Oth. O villainy!

Cas. Most heathenish, and most gross! RITSON.

³ The first copy has,—in the *nick*. It was, I suppose, thought upon
revisal, that *nick* was too familiar. JOHNSON.

Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian state :—Come, bring away.

Oth. Soft you ; a word or two, before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know it ;
No more of that :—I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am ;⁴ nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice : then must you speak
Of one, that lov'd not wisely, but too well ;
Of one, not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme ; of one, whose hand,
Like the base Júdean, threw a pearl away,
Richer than all his tribe ;⁵ of one, whose subdu'd eyes,

Albeit

⁴ The first quarto reads,—*Speak of them as they are.* The present reading, which is the reading of the folio, has more force. JOHNSON.

⁵ I have restored *Judian*, from the elder quarto, as the genuine and more eligible reading. Mr. Pope thinks this was occasioned probably by the word *tribe* just after : I have many reasons to oppose this opinion. In the first place, the most ignorant Indian, I believe, is so far the reverse of the *dunghill-cock* in the fable, as to know the estimation of a pearl beyond that of a barley corn. So that, in that respect, the thought itself would not be just. Then, if our author had designed to reflect on the ignorance of the Indian without any farther reproach, he would have called him *rude*, and not *base*. Again, I am persuaded, as my friend Mr. Warburton long ago observed, the phrase is not here *literal*, but *metaphorical* ; and, by his *pearl*, our author very properly means *a fine woman*. But Mr. Pope objects farther to the reading *Judian*, because to make sense of this, we must pre-suppose some particular story of a Jew alluded to ; which is much less obvious : but has Shakspeare never done this, but in this single instance ? I am satisfied, in his *Judian*, he is alluding to Herod ; who, in a fit of blind jealousy, threw away such a jewel of a wife as Mariamne was to him. What can be more parallel in circumstance, than the conduct of Herod and Othello ? Nor was the story so little obvious as Mr. Pope seems to imagine : for, in the year 1613, the lady Elizabeth Carew published a tragedy called *MARIAM, the Fair Queen of JEWRY*. I shall only add, that our author might write *Judian*, or *Judean*, (if that should be alledged as any objection) instead of *Judæan*, with the same licence and change of accent, as, in his *Antony and Cleopatra*, he shortens the second syllable of Euphrates in pronunciation : which was a liberty likewise taken by Spencer, of whom our author was a studious imitator.

THEOBALD.

Like the base Júdean,] Thus the folio. The first quarto, 1622, reads—*Indian*. Mr. Theobald therefore is not accurate in the preceding note, in his account of the old copies. MALONE.

H h 2

The

Albeit unused to the melting mood,
 Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
 Their medicinal gum : Set you down this :
 And say, besides,—that in Aleppo once,
 Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk⁶
 Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state,
 I took by the throat the circumcised dog,

And

The elder quarto reads *Judian*, and this is certainly right. And by the *Judian* is meant Herod, whose usage to Mariamne is so apposite to the speaker's case, that a more proper instance could not be thought of. Besides, he was the subject of a tragedy at that time, as appears from the words in *Hamlet*, where an ill player is described,

“ ——— to out-herod Herod.”

The metaphorical term of a *pearl* for a fine woman, is so common as scarce to need examples. In *Troilus and Cressida*, a lover says of his mistress,

“ There she lies a PEARL.”—

And again,

“ Why she is a *pearl*, whose price,” &c. WARBURTON.

I cannot join with the learned criticks in conceiving this passage to refer either to the ignorance of the natives of India, in respect of *pearls*, or the well-known story of Herod and Mariamne. The poet might just as fairly be supposed to have alluded to that of Jephthah and his daughter.

STEEVENS.

I abide by the old text, “ the base *Judian*.” Shakspeare seems to allude to *Herod* in the play of *Mariamne* :

“ I had but one inestimable *jewel*——

“ Yet I in suddaine choler cast it downe,

“ And dasht it all to pieces.” FARMER.

The words quoted by Dr. Warburton from *Hamlet* do not prove what they are adduced for. The *Herod* there alluded to, was a character in one of the ancient *Mysteries*.

I once thought that the accent here given to *Judean* was a strong objection to this reading : and that the word must have been *Judéan* or *Judæan*, (as a derivative from *Judæa*) which would not suit the metre. But the objection was founded on a mistake ; for derivative words of this kind were thus accented in Shakspeare's time.

Those who would adopt the original reading, *Indian*, may urge in its support that the pearl naturally brings a people of the East to Shakspeare's mind ; the connexion in his time being considered so strong, that a contemporary author has distinguished the inhabitants of *India* by an epithet founded on the circumstance of their abounding in pearls.

On the other hand, the word *tribe* is strongly in favour of the reading of the text, and I have now no doubt that it is the true one. MALONE.

⁶ I am told that it is immediate death for a Christian to strike a Turk in Aleppo. Othello is boasting of his own audacity. STEEVENS.

And smote him—thus. [Stabs himself.

Lod. O bloody period!

Gra. All, that's spoke, is marr'd.

Oth. I kiss'd thee, ere I kill'd thee;—No way but this,
[Falling upon DESDEMONA.

Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. [Dies.

Caf. This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;
For he was great of heart.

Lod. O Spartan dog,⁷

More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!

Look on the tragick loading of this bed; [To IAGO.

This is thy work: the object poisons sight;—

Let it be hid.—Gratiano, keep the house,

And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,

For they succeed to you.—To you, lord governor,

Remains the censure of this hellish villain;⁸

The time, the place, the torture,—O enforce it!

Myself

⁷ The dogs of Spartan race were reckoned among those of the most fierce and savage kind. HANMER.

The Spartan dogs in our poet's contemplation, were *blood-bounds*.

MALONE.

⁸ Rymer, who had neither vigour of imagination to make a poet, nor strength of judgement to make a critick, as appears from his *Edgar*, and his *Remarks on Shakspeare*, had yet just enough to play the buffoon and caviller. His criticism on the *Poets of the last Age*, with only a mixture of trite remarks, transcribed from the French commentators on Aristotle, are one continued heap of ignorance and insolence. Almost the only remark on Shakspeare, which, I think, deserves an answer, is upon Iago's character, which he thus censures: *To entertain the audience (says he) with something new and surprising, against common sense and nature, he would pass upon us a close, dissembling, false, ungrateful rascal, instead of an open-hearted, frank, plain-dealing soldier, a character constantly worn by them for some thousands of years in the world.* This hath the appearance of sense, being founded on that rule of *Nature* and *Aristotle*, that each character should have manners convenient to the age, sex, and condition.

Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores, &c.

says Horace. But how has our critick applied it? According to this rule it is confessed, that a soldier should be brave, generous, and a man of honour. This is to be his dramatick character. But either *one* or *more* of any order may be brought in. If only one, then the character of the order takes its denomination from the manners of that *one*. Had therefore the only soldier in this play been Iago, the rule had been transgressed, and Rymer's censure well founded. For then this *eternal villain* must

Myself will straight aboard; and, to the state,
This heavy act with heavy heart relate.

[*Exeunt.*⁹

must have given the character of the soldiery; which had been unjust and unnatural. But if a *number* of the same order be represented, then the character of the order is taken from the manners of the majority; and this according to nature and common sense. Now in this play there are many of the order of the soldiery; and all, excepting Iago, represented as open, generous, and brave. From *these* the soldier's character is to be taken; and not from Iago, who is brought as an exception to it: unless it be unnatural to suppose there could be an exception; or that a villain ever insinuated himself into that corps. And thus Shakspeare stands clear of this impertinent criticism. WARBURTON.

—— *the* censure——] i. e. the sentence. STEEVENS.

⁹ The beauties of this play impress themselves so strongly upon the attention of the reader, that they can draw no aid from critical illustration. The fiery openness of Othello, magnanimous, artless, and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge; the cool malignity of Iago, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance; the soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit, and conscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected, are such proofs of Shakspeare's skill in human nature, as, I suppose, it is vain to seek in any modern writer. The gradual progress which Iago makes in the Moor's conviction, and the circumstances which he employs to enflame him, are so artfully natural, that though it will perhaps not be said of him as he says of himself, that he is *a man not easily jealous*, yet we cannot but pity him, when at last we find him *perplexed in the extreme*.

There is always danger, lest wickedness, conjoined with abilities, should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation; but the character of Iago is so conducted, that he is from the first scene to the last hated and despised.

Even the inferior characters of this play would be very conspicuous in any other piece, not only for their justness, but their strength. Cassio is brave, benevolent, and honest, ruined only by his want of stubbornness to resist an insidious invitation. Roderigo's suspicious credulity, and impatient submission to the cheats which he sees practised upon him, and which by persuasion he suffers to be repeated, exhibit a strong picture of a weak mind, betrayed by unlawful desires to a false friend; and the virtue of Emilia is such as we often find, worn loosely, but not cast off, easy to commit small crimes, but quickened and alarmed at atrocious villainies.

The scenes from the beginning to the end are busy, varied by happy interchanges, and regularly promoting the progression of the story; and the narrative in the end, though it tells but what is known already, yet is necessary to produce the death of Othello.

Had

Had the scene opened in Cyprus, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting to a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity. JOHNSON.

To Dr. Johnson's admirable and nicely discriminative character of *Othello*, it may seem unnecessary to make any addition; yet I cannot forbear to conclude our commentaries on this transcendent poet with the fine eulogy which the judicious and learned Lowth has pronounced on him, with a particular reference to this tragedy, perhaps *the most perfect* of all his works.

“ In his viris [tragediæ Græcæ scilicet scriptoribus] accessio quædam Philosophiæ erat Poetica facultas: neque sane quisquam adhuc Poesin ad fastigium suum ac culmen evexit, nisi qui prius in intima Philosophia artis suæ fundamenta jecerit.

“ Quod si quis objiciat, nonnullos in hoc ipso poeseos genere excelluisse, qui nunquam habiti sunt Philosophi, ac ne literis quidem præter cæteros imbuti; sciat is, me rem ipsam quærere, non de vulgari opinione, aut de verbo laborare: *qui autem tantum ingenio consecutus est, ut naturas hominum, vimque omnem humanitatis, causasque eas, quibus aut incitatur mentis impetus aut retunditur, penitus perspectas habeat, ejusque omnes motus oratione non modo explicet, sed effingat, planeque oculis subjiciat; sed excitet, regat, commoveat, moderetur; eum, etsi disciplinarum instrumento minus adjutum, eximie tamen esse Philosophum arbitrari.* Quo in genere affectum Zelotypiæ, ejusque causas, adjuncta, progressiones, effectus, in una SHAKSPEARI nostri fabula, copiosius, subtilius, accuratius etiam veriusque pertractari existimo, quam ab omnibus omnium Philosophorum scholis in simili argumento est unquam disputatum.” [Prælectio prima, edit. 1763, p. 8.]

MALONE.

If by “the most perfect” is meant the *most regular* of the foregoing plays, I subscribe to Mr. Malone's opinion; but if his words were designed to convey a more exalted praise, without a moment's hesitation I should transfer it to *MACBETH*.

It is true, that the domestick tragedy of *Othello* affords room for a various and forcible display of character. The less familiar groundwork of *Macbeth* (as Dr. Johnson has observed) excludes the influence of peculiar dispositions. That exclusion, however, is recompensed by a loftier strain of poetry, and by events of higher rank; by supernatural agency, by the solemnities of incantation, by shades of guilt and horror deepening in their progress, and by visions of futurity solicited in aid of hope, but eventually the ministers of despair.

Were it necessary to weigh the pathetick effusions of these dramas against each other, it is generally allowed that the sorrows of Desdemona would be more than counterbalanced by those of Macduff.

Yet if our author's rival pieces (the distinct property of their subjects considered) are written with equal force, it must still be admitted that the latter has more of originality. A novel of considerable length (perhaps amplified and embellished by the English translator of it) supplied a regular and circumstantial outline for *Othello*; while a few slight hints collected

collected from separate narratives of Holinshed, were expanded into the sublime and awful tragedy of *Macbeth*.

Should readers, who are alike conversant with the appropriate excellencies of poetry and painting, pronounce on the reciprocal merits of these great productions, I must suppose they would describe them as of different pedigrees. They would add, that one was of the school of Raphael, the other from that of Michael Angelo; and that if the steady Sophocles and Virgil should have decided in favour of *Othello*, the remonstrances of the daring Æschylus and Homer would have claimed the laurel for *Macbeth*.

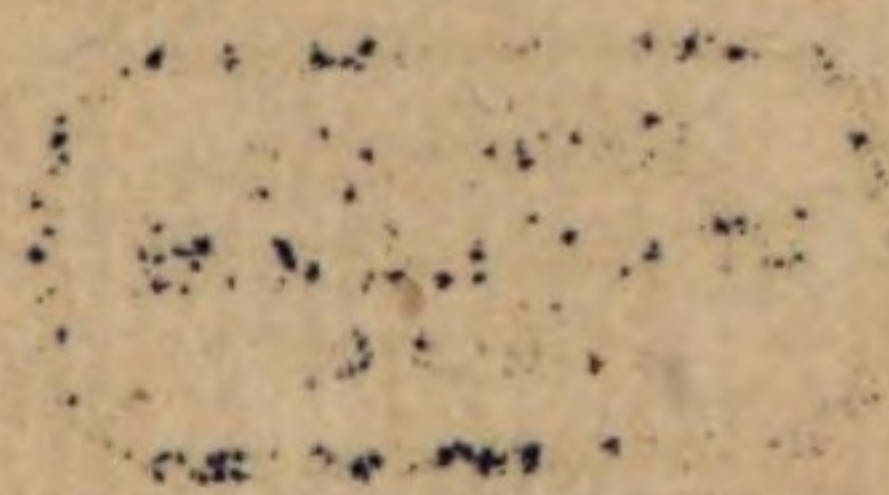
To the sentiments of Dr. Lowth respecting the tragedy of *Othello*, a general elogium on the dramattick works of Shakspeare, imputed by a judicious and amiable critick to Milton, may be not improperly subjoined:

“There is good reason to suppose (says my late friend the Rev. Thomas Warton, in a note on *L'Allegro*,) that Milton threw many additions and corrections into the *THEATRUM POETARUM*, a book published by his nephew Edward Philips, in 1675. It contains criticisms far above the taste of that period. Among these is the following judgement on Shakspeare, which was not then, I believe, the general opinion.”—“In tragedy, never any expressed a more lofty and tragick heighth, never any represented nature more purely to the life: and where the polishments of art are most wanting, as probably his learning was not extraordinary, he pleases with a certain *WILD* and *NATIVE* elegance.” P. 194.

What greater praise can any poet have received, than that of the author of *Paradise Lost*? STEEVENS.

F I N I S.

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Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616

The Plays Of William Shakspeare Accurately Printed From The Text Of Mr.
Steevens's Last Edition. With A Selection Of The Most Important Notes. In
Eight Volumes
Bd.: 8

London 1797

Bibl.Mont. 881-8

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10944847-2